



**The Massacre
Memoirs**



**Portrait of a
Vanishing Artist**



**Gentlemen
Spies**

The Beaver

CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE 

February | March 2010

ARCTIC VISIONS

Two groundbreaking films.

Nanook of the North soared. The other was forgotten.



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The Beaver

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Canada

Journals of progress

"This is a 'journal of progress' in every sense."

— Clifton Thomas, founding editor of *The Beaver*, October 1920.

The cover of this issue depicts a scene from *Nanook of the North* — considered the world's first feature-length documentary film. The image shows Nanook — played by a Canadian Inuit man named Allakariallak — with his arm cocked and ready to hurl a harpoon at his prey.

Shot by American moviemaker Robert J. Flaherty, the film captivated audiences around the world after it debuted in 1922. Released two years after the founding of *The Beaver* in 1920, *Nanook*, like *The Beaver*, offered a window on a world most Canadians would never witness first-hand.



MARIANNE HELM

Viewers obviously connected with *Nanook's* realistic vision of life in the Canadian North, just as they yearned for the stories found in *The Beaver*.

Launched as an internal newsletter of the Hudson's Bay Company, *The Beaver: A Journal of Progress* soon outgrew its modest aspirations. By the 1930s, it had a large following among many non-HBC employees and was relaunched as *The Beaver: A Magazine of the North*.

Over the next few decades, *The Beaver* carried a fascinating mélange of travelogues, photo essays, book reviews, and news from the North. It featured history stories, too, but for much of its existence *The Beaver* was not a history magazine. It was, as the founding editor stated in the inaugural issue, a "journal of progress," with eyes clearly focused on both the present and the future.

Over time, our vision of, and fascination with, the North, changed.

With the Arctic no longer inaccessible, old ways of life fell to the wayside. Spears were replaced by rifles, dogsleds by snowmobiles. As the nation moved forward, we increasingly looked backwards, reminiscing about the stories and people who came before us. The magazine was no different. And so we redefined ourselves again, this time as *The Beaver: Canada's History Magazine*.

This issue will be our last as *The Beaver*. Beginning in April, we will begin a new journey as *Canada's History*. It is more than just a name change — it's a reaffirmation of who we are and what we do. While born of the fur trade, the magazine's mission today is to tell the stories of all Canadians.

As we take this bold next step, I think back to the words of Clifton Thomas and the well-thumbed copy of that first issue of *The Beaver* that sits on my desk. Under the title "We Make Our Bow," Thomas promised readers he would endeavour to make *The Beaver* a worthy journal of the HBC.

"Whether it measures up to this lusty ambition is not for *The Beaver* to say, but for you, the readers to judge," Thomas wrote. "Thumbs up or down, *The Beaver* craves your indulgence — to remember that it has not yet found its legs, the first issue being largely an introduction."

Like Thomas, we also crave your indulgence as we embark on our new journey as *Canada's History*. We will endeavour to make the magazine vibrant, intelligent, and relevant, while never forgetting where we came from. At *Canada's History*, we will hold true to the legacy of *The Beaver* and continue to be a "journal of progress."

Mark Reid, Editor
editors@historysociety.ca

COVER: MCCORD MUSEUM

COMING APRIL 2010: A NEW BEGINNING ...

CANADA'S HISTORY

Formerly The Beaver

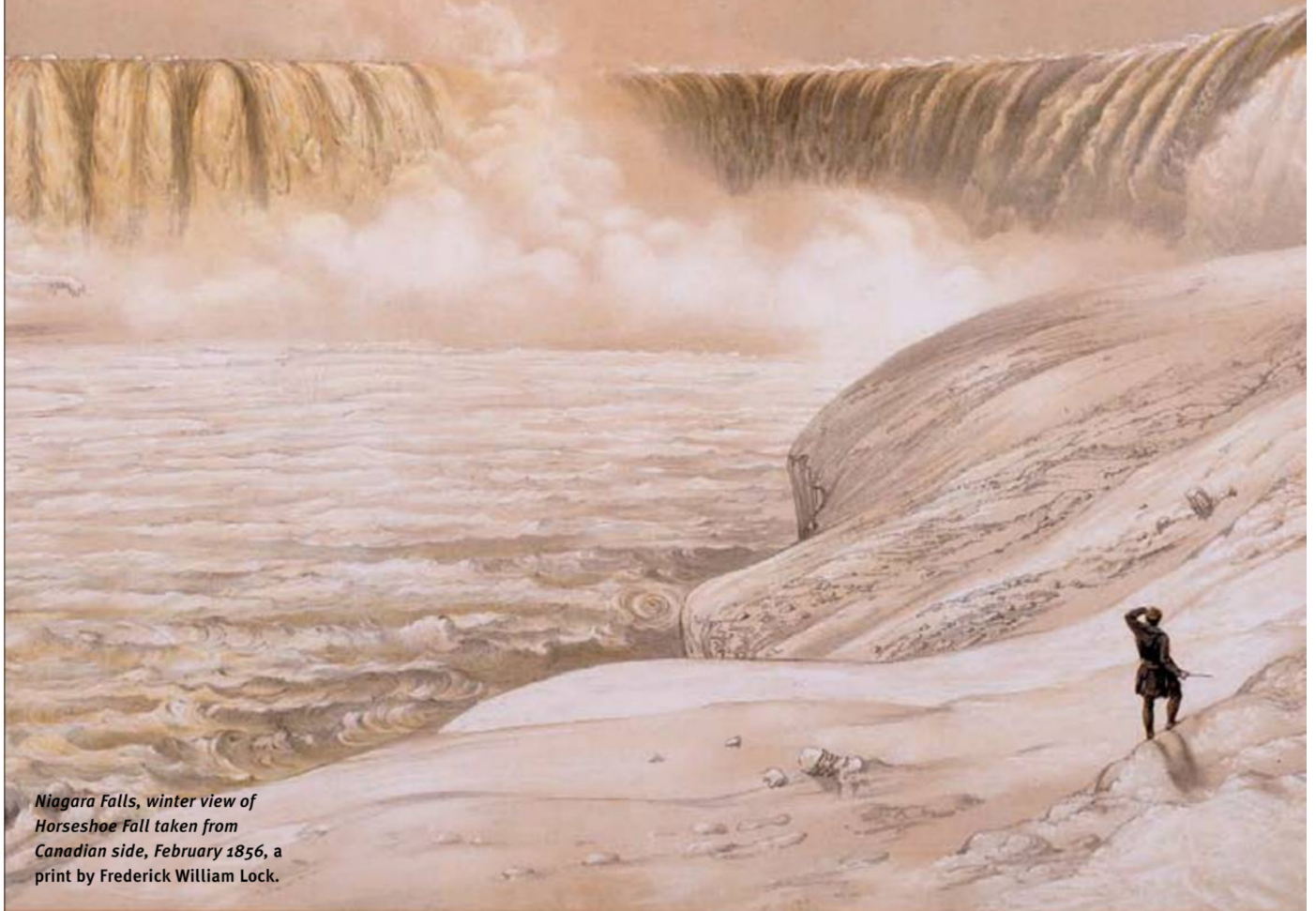
ARCTIC VISIONS

Two groundbreaking films.
Nanook of the North soared. The other was forgotten.



*And in the dreary reign of Winter's frosts,
When feebler streams, locked in their iron grasp,
Lie still, and stay their murmuring tones awhile,
Niagara heeds not, but still downward moves,—
In swift but solemn majesty descends*

— Niagara Falls: A Poem in Three Cantos by James



*Niagara Falls, winter view of
Horseshoe Fall taken from
Canadian side, February 1856, a
print by Frederick William Lock.*



The Beaver

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In the early days of moviemaking, two companies competed to tell the story of the North. *Nanook of the North* soared to enduring fame; no one remembers the other film.

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In the 1890s, strife-torn Armenia was no place for a well-bred Canadian lady. But Katherine Bell Fraser was no ordinary woman.

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Like Emily Carr, Mildred Valley Thornton played a big role in preserving native history through art. Unlike Carr, she faded into obscurity.

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Letters



Scott memorial

I really enjoyed your article on Barbara Ann Scott ["Ice Queen in Hot Seat," December 2009/January 2010].

Did you know there is a Barbara Ann Scott Ice Rink in downtown Toronto, in the centre of the block bound by Yonge, College, Bay, and Gerrard Streets? There's an historical plaque there erected in 1984 by the city. You can see it on my website, torontohistory.org.

ALAN L. BROWN
TORONTO

Olympic math

Thank you for a most enjoyable issue [December 2009/January 2009] on the Olympic Games — you brought back many memorable moments.

However, a minor mistake was noted in your editor's note, "Golden Moments," when Mark Reid commented, "every four years we are drawn to the Olympics." In actual fact, it should have read "every two years."

Beginning in 1994, with the Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway, the practice of having both Summer and Winter Games the same year was abandoned and they are now separated by two years — a small matter which in no way detracted from the general excellence of your coverage.

LARRY WAY
CALGARY

Women's stories

In your Getaway "Sin City" article [December 2009/January 2010] you mention "hundreds of women who were displaced by the 1906 San Francisco earthquake," making their way to Alexander Street brothels. Got any stories about that? Hundreds? Must be someone's grandma around with some very interesting stories of importing California culture and mores to the Pacific Coast north.

As a U.S.A./Canadian dual citizen who's lived in both Barbary Coast and Vancouver's Eastside, I'd love to hear about women who preceded me. Stories can be sent to: Janet.Sommer@albertahealthservices.ca

JAN SOMMER PH.D.
BANFF, ALBERTA

Picture imperfect

I was very pleased to read your account of the two awards won by the Vancouver Historical Society for its recreation of the 1907 Vancouver footage shot by William H. Harbeck ["Picture Perfect," December 2009/January 2010].

While not taking away from the achievements of the many individuals who contributed to this project, including myself, I would like to clarify some points.

The footage sent to Library and Archives Canada in 1994 came from Australia's National Film and Sound Archive, not from anonymous

"researchers." More importantly, the 1907 footage was not just of Vancouver; it began with scenes from Victoria. The restored footage that premiered at Ridge Theatre in Vancouver on October 17, 1996, was titled *Vancouver and Victoria Street and Harbour Scenes 1907*. The film therefore is as important to Victoria's early cinematic history as it is to Vancouver's.

Harbeck also made two subsequent trips to British Columbia, but the films from these trips, so far as is known, have not survived.

On the 1909 trip he photographed himself at Yoho National Park. The caption on the front of the photograph mount bears his signature and states that he was the "official motion picture photographer, C.P.R."

DAVID MATTISON
VICTORIA

[Note: For more information on William Harbeck and his projects, go to TheBeaver.ca.]

Tour the North

The October/November 2009 column "Partners in Time" by Deborah Morrison stated that Prince of Wales Fort is virtually inaccessible.

My company, Sea North Tours, has been taking visitors to the Prince of Wales Fort by boat for over thirty years. We offer these tours seven days a week in July and August, weather and ice conditions permitting.

We actively market the fort, as do other tour operators, and have invested in the *Sea North II*, a custom thirty-passenger tour boat with a shallow enough draft to get into the fort's docking area around high tide.

However, the rest is correct; there are issues between the local Parks Canada office and tour operators. In a nutshell, many tour operators feel that Parks Canada is trying to legislate themselves into tourism and force private operators to use their services.

Also correct is that private tour

operators are fiercely proud of the region's historic sites and have been offering tours of Cape Merry, Prince of Wales Fort, and Sloop Cove by bus, boat, track machine, and helicopter for many years, with satisfied visitors numbering in the thousands.

MIKE MACRI
SEA NORTH TOURS LTD.
CHURCHILL, MANITOBA

Tank trouble

The October-November 2009 issue of *The Beaver* included the excellent article "Valour Sold" by Mark Reid.

Accompanying the article, was a photograph of "German prisoners wearing gas masks near Ypres, Belgium, in April 1915."

In the background of the photograph is the unmistakable looming ghost of a British Mark I tank, which according to a Wikipedia article did not enter active combat service until September 15, 1916 during the battle of the Somme.

Something's wrong here.

RICHARD OUTERBRIDGE
VIA EMAIL

[Editor's note: Mr. Outerbridge is correct. Combat tanks were not used until 1916. The image was incorrectly captioned by the original archival provider. Regrettably, the error slipped through the fact-checking process.]

On the trail

I read with interest the Currents article by Nelle Oosterom, in the October/November 2009 *Beaver* about the NWMP trail.

My grandparents, William D. Cameron and Catherine Cameron, and my father Wallace J. Cameron (then aged nineteen), homesteaded in southwest Saskatchewan in 1910. Their half section was directly on the NWMP Trail between Fort Walsh and Wood Mountain.

I was a thirteen years old in 1942 and my dad often pointed out the wagon ruts

in the unbroken prairies to the east of the village of Mankota.

He told of NWMP constables' visits to their sod shack from 1910 to 1915. In 1961, at the age of seventy, Dad participated in identifying and marking the NWMP trail.

WILLIAM J. CAMERON
OKOTOKS, ALBERTA

What's in a name?

I was so glad to receive my first copy of *The Beaver* [October/November 2009] and wonderfully surprised that a schooner shown on pages 4 to 5 was named *Maggie Louisa*.

I didn't think my name was so significant, as that is my name — Maggie Louisa!

Now I want to find out about the significance of my name and the schooner.

Thank you!

MAGGIE LOUISA BUGDEN
VIA EMAIL

Direction correction

I would first of all like to say how much I enjoy reading every issue of *The Beaver*. Great magazine! Keep up the good work!

In the recent December 2009/January 2010 Currents article "Rock wall enthusiasts" by Phil Koch, I noted a bit of a glitch. The article says, "Trail is situated 150 kilometres southwest of Kelowna," but if you check a map, you will find Trail is in fact southeast of Kelowna.

BARRY LEE
VIA EMAIL

Remembering Dieppe

My wife bought a newsstand copy of *The Beaver* to subscribe for a friend. I read the "Letters" page and asked her to buy me a subscription for Christmas, too. Your letter writers discussed the previous issue's article on Dieppe ["Disaster at Dieppe," August/September 2009].

As an amateur military history buff, I have read extensively about Dieppe and spoken with survivors who were still serv-

ing when I joined my first unit.

Veterans of Dieppe told me that there was a false start, which was cancelled; then the operation was suddenly restarted.

By that time, with so many false alarms, many soldiers had become jaded and stuffed their ammunition pouches with socks to save weight; some even left their rifles behind in barracks and frantically tried to borrow a weapon of any kind when they were embarked.

A major problem at Dieppe was communications. Those onshore could not call off the second wave when they discovered the strength of the German defences.

The portable high-frequency radio sets of those days were inadequate for the task, and every whip antenna that was raised above the sides of the beached craft was immediately shot off by the weight of German machine gun fire.

But one signaller established contact by running a spare piece of wire along the metal gunwale of his landing craft — something that should not have succeeded, according to the laws of physics.

CHARLES HOOKER, MAJOR (RET),
ROYAL CANADIAN CORPS OF SIGNALS
ORANGEVILLE, ONTARIO

The Beaver welcomes readers' comments. E-mail us at editors@historysociety.ca or write to *The Beaver*, PO Box 56060, Portage Place RPO, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0G9 Canada. Please include your address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

WANTED

Have a great idea for
a feature or Currents?

Have a photo to share
for the Album page?

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The Beaver is changing its name to **Canada's History**



The Massacre
Memoirs



The Vanishing
Artist

Gentlemen
SPIES

CANADA'S **HISTORY**

Formerly The Beaver Magazine

ARCTIC VISIONS

Two groundbreaking films. Nanook of the North
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Plus: Canada's Stonehenge

- New name
- New look
- New online features
- More great stories!



 We're sure you are going to enjoy the new look of Canada's History magazine. Our commitment to delivering fresh, relevant, and interesting stories about Canada's past – both in print and online – remains the same.

CANADA'S
HISTORY

Living history

Small city claims big trains

Historic dining hall adds lustre to rail museum.

It started with an old derelict railway car brought to Cranbrook, British Columbia, thirty-three years ago, but now the Trains Deluxe Canadian Museum of Rail Travel is recognized as one of the most unique attractions in the province.

The museum has evolved over time through the painstaking work and dedication of many individuals, but it arguably wouldn't be where it is today without the vision, devotion, and organizational skills of one man — its founder and present executive director, Garry Anderson.

Anderson obtained a degree in architecture from the University of British Columbia after writing his thesis on Cranbrook's downtown urban landscape and heritage. Then, in 1976, he brought together a core group of local citizens and formed the Cranbrook Archives, Museum and Landmark Foundation.

For its initial project, the group decided to construct an "architectural screen" to improve the unsightly railway yard immediately north of Cranbrook's main street. The foundation borrowed \$5,000 to purchase an out-of-service railway car for the centrepiece of the project. The car was to be gutted, restored, and set on a short piece of track to serve as an exhibition gallery for regional artists and historians.

"Just before the car arrived, research led us to an astounding discovery," Anderson remembers. "We had inadvertently purchased the dining car Argyle, a survivor of Canada's most luxurious train, the Trans-Canada Limited [1929], also known as the Millionaires' Special. Through further investigation, we learned that other cars from this legendary train had survived as well."

"The short life of this historic all first class train was tragic," Anderson says. "Due to the widespread economic collapse, it was taken out of service in 1931."

The foundation eventually made plans for the revival of the entire train, and it was ready for exhibit in 1992, after being completely restored.

Another notable train currently being restored by the muse-



View of the restored Royal Alexandra Hall.

um foundation is the Soo-Spokane Train Deluxe (1907). This was a CPR international transcontinental train that travelled across southern Canadian soil to link Seattle and Minneapolis.

"It was a significant train for Canada," Anderson says. "It was direct competition to the stateside railroads of the time, just when Canadian sovereignty was evolving."

The most recent addition to the museum is the former Grand Café of the prestigious Royal Alexandra Hotel built in Winnipeg in 1906. When the elite CPR hotel was demolished in 1971, the oak-panelled dining room was carefully dismantled. It survived in hundreds of coded pieces that were stored in a semi-trailer for over twenty-five years.

"As a millennium project, we undertook to recreate the entire 2,800-square-foot room complete with handcrafted French doors and dimming chandeliers, even replicating the vaulted ceiling. Now dubbed the Royal Alexandra Hall, it became the hub of our newly expanded museum facilities," Anderson explains.

In 2007, Garry Anderson was inducted into the Order of Canada for his many years of work developing the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel. He received a BC Community Achievement Award that same year with reference to his restoration of the Royal Alexandra Hall.

— Doug Pyper



Grand Café of the Royal Alexandra Hotel in 1906.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE CRANBROOK ARCHIVES AT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF RAIL TRAVEL.

TAKE THE DAY OFF



February 3

To mark the day in 1961 that the federal government approved the merger of two banks to form the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Put all your eggs in one basket.

Currents

Our home & native ...

Basketball

Given just fourteen days to invent a new indoor game as an athletic distraction for rowdy students during cold winters, Dr. James Naismith succeeded far beyond what he and his school could have hoped for.



Dr. James Naismith

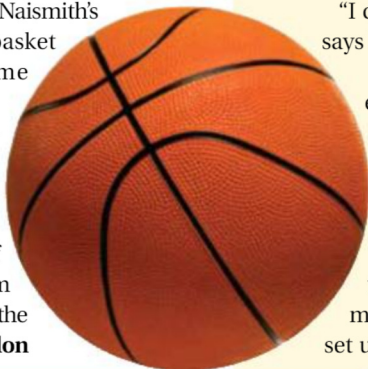
Born in Almonte, Ontario, Naismith attended McGill University in Montreal and was working as a physical education instructor at the YMCA Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts, when he invented basketball in 1891. His

new game used two peach baskets affixed to ten-foot-high railings and was played with a soccer ball and nine players on each team.

The game involved thirteen rules, with the side making the most goals by throwing or batting the ball into the baskets being declared the winner. Eventually, baskets were used with the bottom ends removed to allow the ball to fall through them.

The first official game took place on January 20, 1892. One of Naismith's students called it "basket ball," and the name stuck.

Naismith's dedication to developing character through sport paid off — the game became part of the school curriculum in Canada and around the world. — **Beverley Tallon**



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The fur trade's un

Exhibition portrays rivalry that laid Canada's claim to the West.

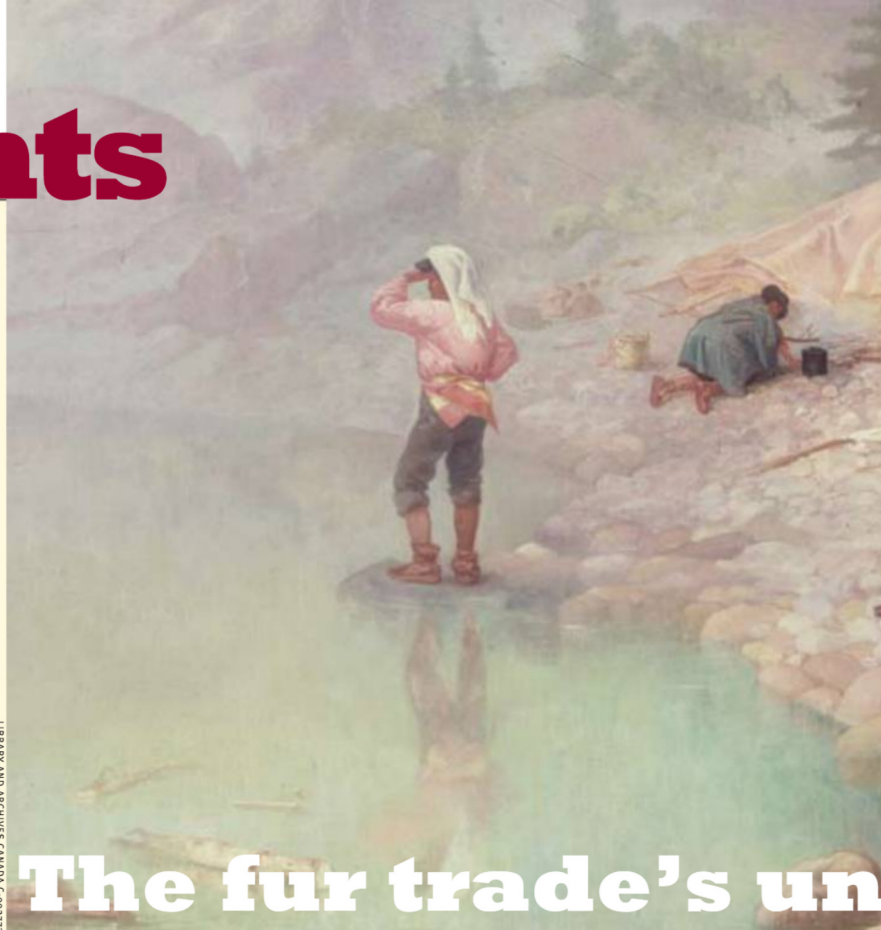
Canada would probably be a much smaller place today had a group of upstart fur traders from Montreal not taken on the powerful Hudson's Bay Company.

That's the message the Canadian Museum of Civilization hopes to get across with a year-long exhibit that tells the story of the North West Company. As curator David Morrison sees it, it's a story not often told.

"I can't think of a major exhibition in Canada on this topic, period," says Morrison.

The exhibit *Profit and Ambition*, which runs until September, covers 650 square metres and includes more than 250 artifacts, works of art, and hundreds of pages of original documents relating to when the company was in operation between 1779 and 1821.

As far as Morrison is concerned, the years of fierce competition between the Bay men and the Nor'westers had a huge impact on how Canada would eventually take shape. This is because the London-based Hudson's Bay Company, which held a trading monopoly over the entire Hudson Bay drainage area, was content to set up posts on the shore of Hudson Bay and let native trappers travel



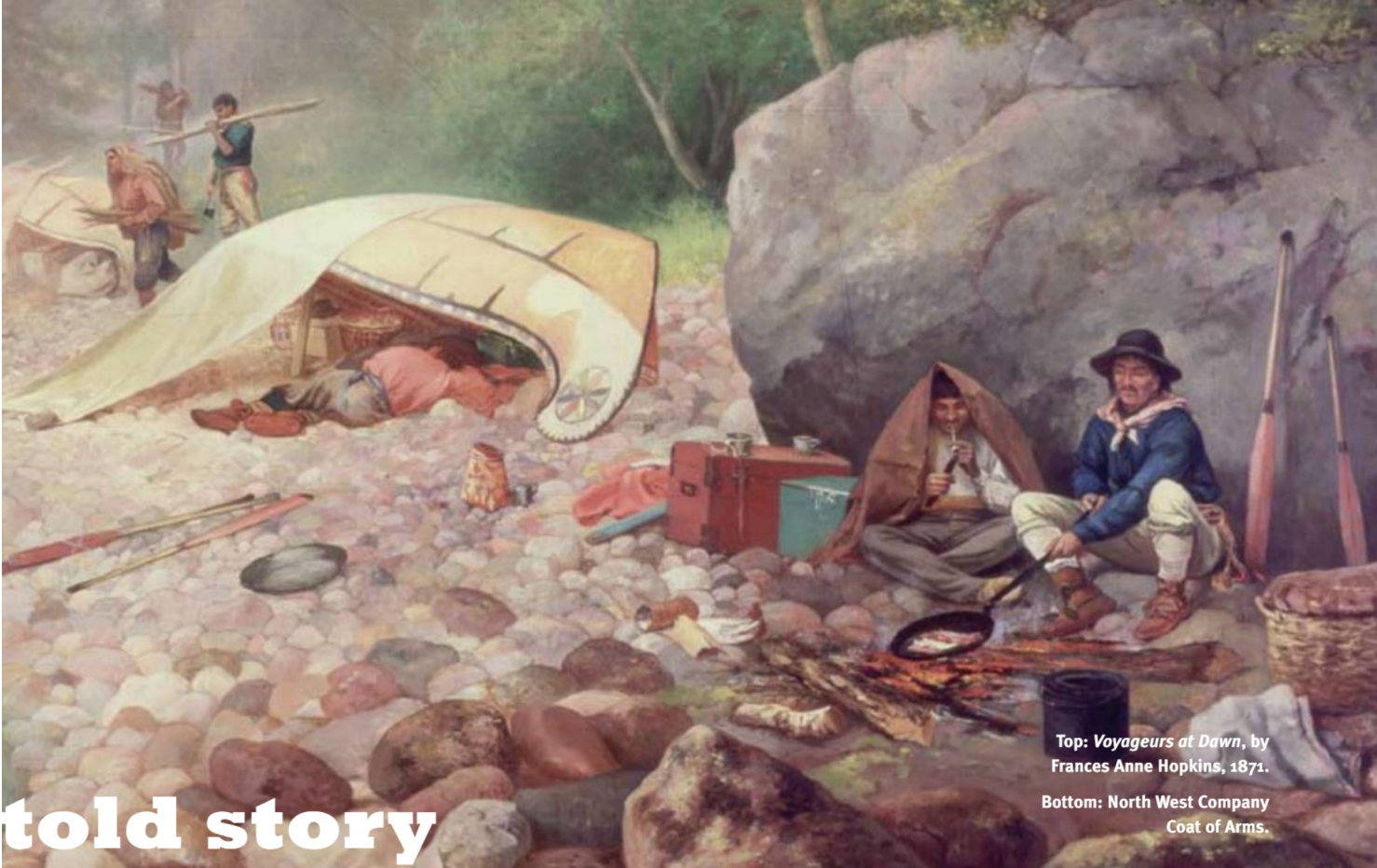
February 4

To remember the day in 1916 when a fire was brought under control after it consumed most of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa and took seven lives. Fly the flag at half-mast.



February 20

To note the day in 1808 when Upper Canada Assembly member and unofficial opposition leader Joseph Willcocks was imprisoned for making slanderous remarks. Bite your tongue.



Top: *Voyageurs at Dawn*, by Frances Anne Hopkins, 1871.

Bottom: North West Company Coat of Arms.

told story

there to trade.

But when the Montreal-based North West Company came along, it set up inland trading posts, pushing west as far as the Pacific and north as far as the Arctic. This not only spurred the HBC to follow suit, it also established British sovereignty over a huge region that could easily have become part of the United States.

"If the North West Company hadn't come along, the HBC would have sat on the bay until hell froze over," says Morrison.

North West Company employees such as David Thompson, Alexander Mackenzie, and Simon Fraser explored and mapped the West, solidifying Britain's claim over the region. Included in the exhibit is a very rare first edition of Mackenzie's published journal, as well as original journals handwritten by Thompson and



LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

Fraser.

Possibly the most attention-getting part of the exhibit is a giant eleven-metre birchbark canoe, known as a *canot de maître*. Canoes like this were used to ship goods on "big water" from Montreal to Fort William at the top of Lake Superior.

"It's surprisingly big — like a small Viking long ship," Morrison says of the canoe, built by the Algonquin Pikwàkanagàn First Nation at Golden Lake, Ontario, in the 1950s.

Works of art in the exhibit include paintings by Frances Anne Hopkins, an Englishwoman who recorded iconic scenes of the fur trade, as well as Swiss-born Peter Rindisbacher.

A scaled-down version of the exhibit will later tour the country.

— Nelle Oosterom



March 1

To celebrate the day in 1879 when Henry Birks opened a jewellery store in Montreal. Remember, all that glitters is not gold.



March 24

To observe the date of the 1786 British order-in-council that prohibited importing U.S. goods to any Quebec port. Think export, eh.

Historic tower will cater to students



PAT HANNEY

One of Canada's first skyscrapers is getting a facelift. Winnipeg's Union Bank Tower, the oldest tall building of its kind in Western Canada, sat vacant for seventeen years until plans for a renovation and expansion were announced in the fall of 2008.

The ten-storey building is a National Historic Site that once boasted the tallest flagpole in the British Empire. No detail was spared when it was built for the Union Bank of Lower Canada in 1904 at the corner of Main Street and William Avenue, next to city hall.

The building's grand interior features marble and gold leaf, and its exterior is equally ornate. The Royal Bank acquired the company in 1925 and occupied the premises until 1992. Since then, different plans to renovate the aging beauty have come and gone.

But the latest plan is moving forward. Red River College began work a few months ago on a \$27-million, two-year project that will add a 40,000-square-foot annex on the west side of the structure, while renovating the 50,000-square-foot office tower and a smaller building on its south side. The new complex will include the college's culinary program and several restaurants. Student residences will occupy the tower's upper floors.

—B.T.



COURTESY GIRL GUIDES OF CANADA

By the numbers

Girl Guides centenary

For the past hundred years, Girl Guides of Canada has been helping girls prepare to meet life's challenges head-on. The first Canadian company formed in St. Catharines, Ontario, in 1910. Others quickly followed, engaging in the then-unwomanly pursuits of camping, hiking, and practising rescue manoeuvres. The movement proved extremely popular, and today its goals remain the same — to challenge girls in their personal development and to help them become responsible citizens.

4 Girl Guide companies established in Canada in 1910 — St. Catharines, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

250 Number of Girl Guides who attended a rally in 1913 at Toronto's Casa Loma, then the palatial home of Lady Mary Pellat, the first chief commissioner of Girl Guides in Canada.

16,700 Pairs of boots the ten thousand Girl Guides of Canada contributed to people in war-ravaged France in 1918.

35 Canadian delegates sent to the first international guiding camp in England in 1924.

10 Amount in cents that it cost to sponsor a square inch of space to build the Guides' headquarters in Toronto in 1962.

1927 Year the first Girl Guide cookies were made in Canada. They were baked by a Guide leader in Regina.

16 Percentage of national Girl Guide revenue today that comes from cookie sales.



Hidden heritage

How Two Bit Creek became Valhalla

Philip Brooksbank, an English immigrant to Canada in 1906, was enthralled by the spectacular scenery that surrounded his new property on the Lower Arrow Lake in British Columbia's West Kootenay country.

As he set about planting apple trees and establishing one of the first fruit orchards in the district, one thing bothered him — the fact that the stream passing through his property bore the pedestrian name of Two Bit Creek.

Brooksbank appealed to the Canadian Pacific Railway to choose another name for its station, but nothing happened. After five years of frustration, he wrote to CPR lands superintendent J. S. Dennis.

His appeal is dated May 30, 1911: "About five years ago I purchased a property ... which on the geological survey map bore the detestable name of Two Bit Creek," Brooksbank wrote. "I tried to think of some name in keeping with the majesty of its surroundings. I found the mountains at the back bore the grand old Norse name of the Valkyrie range, Valhalla mountains, Mt. Woden, etc., and soon decided to change the hateful name of Two Bit Creek and my property to Valhalla."

"As for 'Two Bits' it seems to me nothing less than sacrilege to name so splendid a place by so horrible a name."

After noting that the CPR continued to issue tickets with the hated name, he concluded his appeal by saying, "I should

esteem it a great favour if you would have the name Two Bit expunged from the map forever and Valhalla substituted for it."

Brooksbank's letter, which reposes today in the CPR Archives at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, drew a prompt response. The very next day, Dennis sent off a note advising he had taken up the question with "operating officials asking them to do all they can to have this name changed to Valhalla."

Dennis recommended acceptance of the change, noting in a memo that Brooksbank was intending to bring out more English immigrants, who would no doubt wish to purchase land from the CPR.

Brooksbank responded on June 17, 1911, advising that he was "greatly obliged."

The archives bear no indication of further action, but the efforts of the lands superintendent must have borne fruit, as a station on a CPR branch line serving the district bore the name Valhalla through the 1940s.

In Norse mythology, Valhalla is ruled over by the God Odin and the Valkyries are females who decide who will die in battle. The slain warriors are brought to Valhalla, where they are honoured forever after.

Today, the district is known for the beautiful Valhalla Provincial Park, which extends thirty kilometres along the west shore of adjoining Slocan Lake.

Brooksbank must have gone to his reward in peace, knowing that his beloved home bore a name that matched its splendour.

— Ray Argyle

Newcomers make history connection

Like many regional museums, the Peel Museum tells the story of a region's earlier inhabitants, people who arrived in the 1860s or the 1920s. Its exhibits include things they thought important to pass down through the generations — formal clothing, farm implements, fine china, blacksmithing tools, and the like.

In 2009, knowing that the region is one of Canada's top destinations for immigrants, the museum located in an old

jail in downtown Brampton, Ontario, decided to do something different. "What we did was create a survey that asked newcomers what they brought with them and what was important

to them," explains Josie Premzell, development officer for the museum.

The answers ranged from music and poetry to textiles and spices, with some of the survey participants offering to set up their own displays. The result is an exhibition called *Connections* that Premzell says has had a good response from the public.

Placed side by side with traditional exhibits, newcomer displays range from Peruvian artwork to a video of a young South Asian man playing contemporary music on the tabla, a pair of traditional Indian drums. The exhibition explores the differences and similarities in immigration experiences and continues through March 2010.

— N.O.



A video still from a work by Akhil Patel that is part of the exhibition *Connections* at the Peel Museum.

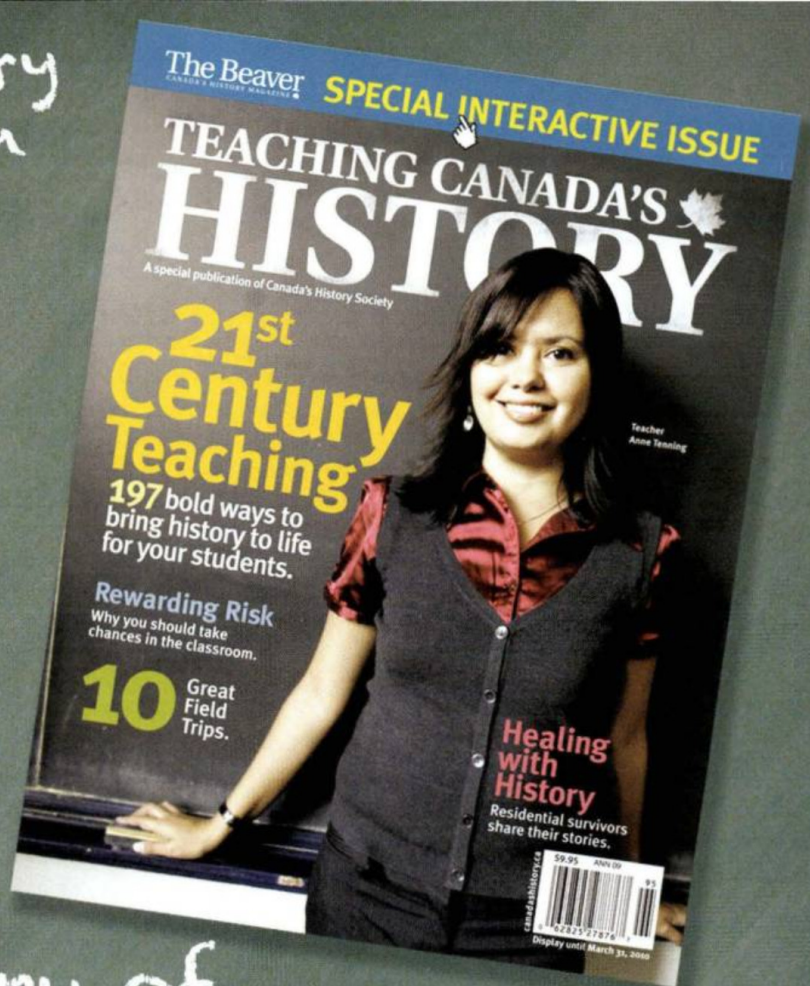
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From the publisher of *The Beaver: Canada's History Magazine*

Christopher Moore

Stone circle mysteries

Could there be a link between Stonehenge and an Alberta medicine wheel?

Is Gordon Freeman crazy? Or is that just how we view inspired outsiders with strange ideas?

Over three decades, Freeman, a retired Edmonton physics professor, has been putting in time out on the bald prairie of southeast Alberta. He's been doing this year after year, living out of his car or in a camper, in the dead of winter and the dust of summer. He takes compass readings. He paces off distances. He photographs alignments.

He is certainly the first to take such findings to Britain to replicate them at Stonehenge. Freeman's ideas are set out in a new book called *Canada's Stonehenge*.

The trend in current British archaeological thought is running against theories of Stonehenge as an observatory. The consensus among experts about prairie stone circles is similar. Most Plains archaeologists agree that prairie people 5,000 years ago were bison hunters who hardly needed elaborate sun-cycle observatories.

he explains, share the latitude where sky watchers could observe solstice sunrises and moonrises falling at right angles to each other, on a cycle where the sightlines lay out a square on the stone circles. Freeman wonders if analogous monuments might exist on the same latitude in Asia. Kazakhstan, perhaps.

One oddity helped convince Freeman. At first, all the Omahk alignments seemed inaccurate, falling before or after the solstices and equinoxes that mark the sun's passage. Then Freeman learned the simple fact any almanac will confirm: equinox may mean "equal night," but day and night are actually equal in length three days before the spring equinox, three days after the fall equinox. Omahk lines up perfectly on those days. Freeman concluded his ancient sky watchers knew more than he did.

When I asked what he hoped would flow from his book, he didn't talk about more measurements and alignments. His goal? "That Indians will have a lot more land and be seen as having a civilization," he said simply.

Freeman thinks recognizing the majesty of Omahk is small recompense for all the destruction Western civilization brought in its wake. Sites like Omahk, he stresses, remain threatened, as do the First Nations Plains cultures that inherited them.

"Genius existed on the prairies at least 5,000 years ago, and it continues," Freeman writes.

You don't need to accept every hypothetical sunrise line to endorse that. 🐾

Canada's Stonehenge: Astounding Archaeological Discoveries in Canada, England, and Wales by Gordon R. Freeman was published by Kingsley Publishing in 2009.



Christopher Moore comments in every issue of *The Beaver*.



The focus of all this effort is a sacred ring, known as a medicine wheel, near Majorville, Alberta. The site is called Ômahkiyáahkóhtóohp in the Siksika language — Omahk for short.

Omahk is a massive central stone cairn with twenty-eight rays of lines running out to a surrounding ring of stones almost thirty metres in diameter. Impressive by any standard, it is perhaps the most intricate of the many stone circles on the Canadian Plains. It's also among the oldest. Its main features are reliably dated to 5,000 years ago.

Omahk is low to the ground and wedded to its landscape, but Freeman sees in it a prairie Stonehenge. He's become convinced he is the first to report how Omahk functioned as an astronomical observa-

But Freeman carries on. He's "a nerd," he happily admits. He notes all the discoveries made by obsessive amateurs who have particular skills and a willingness to put in the time.

For a treatise in archaeoastronomy, *Canada's Stonehenge* is a startlingly beautiful book. It's readable, too. Realizing a monograph was unlikely to survive assessment from skeptical scholars, he put his argument in a story about his life among spectacular landscapes, the cattle and coyotes who visit, and his supportive wife Phyl.

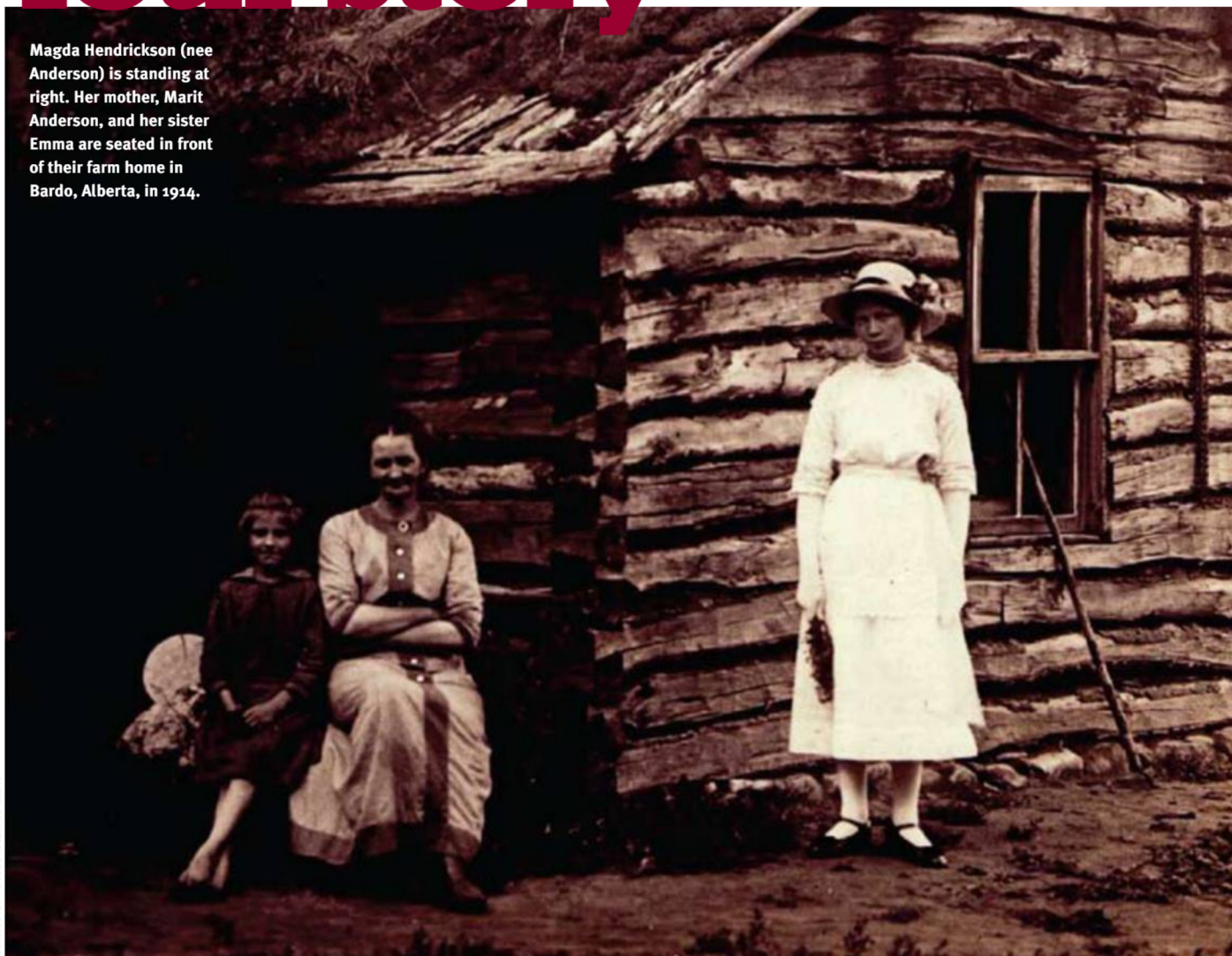
But what is Freeman's Omahk Stonehenge theory?

I feared it might be that scientists from Stonehenge travelled to Alberta 5,000 years ago — or the reverse. No. "It's the fifty-first latitude," Freeman says. The two sites,

Your Story

Magda Hendrickson (nee Anderson) is standing at right. Her mother, Marit Anderson, and her sister Emma are seated in front of their farm home in Bardo, Alberta, in 1914.

PHOTO COURTESY GORDON HENDRICKSON



Back to the future

Gordon Hendrickson stumbles onto a century-old manuscript that predicts what future farms will be like. It is uncannily accurate.

In 2007 I discovered a five-page handwritten Norwegian manuscript among my mother's books. It was inscribed for her tenth birthday — December 3, 1909. I was intrigued to find that the story — probably written by a relative — was an imaginary account of a visit to a farm in Norway during Christmas of 2009. It was a look one-hundred years into the future!

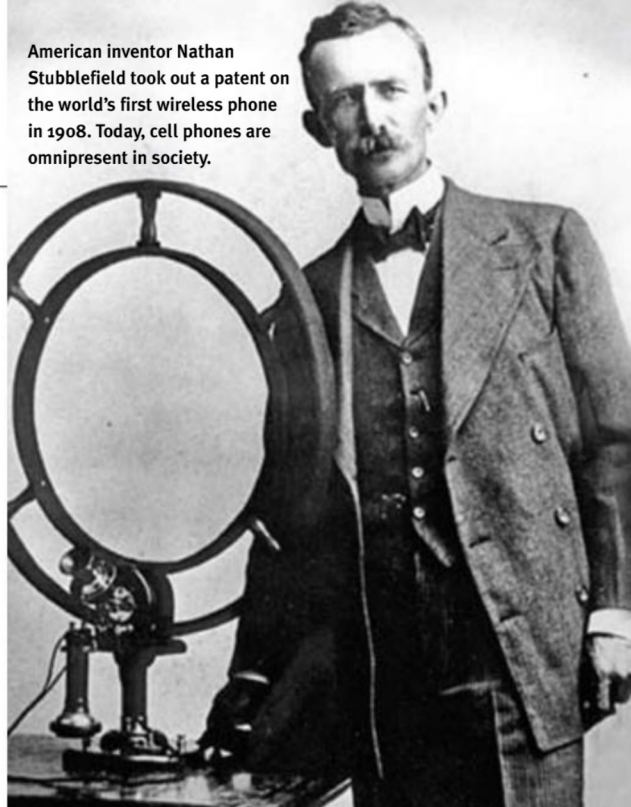
When it was written, my mother, Magda, was a ten-year-old girl of Norwegian descent living in a pioneering agricultural settlement on the Canadian prairies. Back then, air travel, telephones, and wireless radio communication were still new and amazing inventions.

What follows are excerpts from the English translation of this manuscript:

I went by airship from my home in Olso to spend Christmas with distant relatives. ... The trip took two hours. Using the elevator, I and my baggage descended from this marvellous ship. ... I had informed them by wireless telephone of my coming.

While a patent for a "wireless telephone" was issued in 1908, the

American inventor Nathan Stubblefield took out a patent on the world's first wireless phone in 1908. Today, cell phones are omnipresent in society.



type of wireless or cellular phone we know today did not come into being until 1969. The first telephone arrived in my mother's community of Bardo, Alberta, in 1910. This was almost immediately followed by one of the first telephone pranks, with my mother being called to the phone on a Sunday morning and given instructions by "the telephone man" to never use the phone on Sunday. This she solemnly announced to the rest of the family, only to be greeted by laughter from her older brothers, who at once realized that it was a joke.

The manuscript goes on to describe the high-technology features of the Norwegian farm of the future:

All houses were completely fire-proofed [with] automatic fire alarms, whose eyes blinked to indicate there was a fire and where it was. My host showed me around the farm. First, we visited the dairy. Over each cow hangs a milking machine, which is shiny and sterile because it is automatically cleansed each day with an electric cleaner. The milking machines are controlled by timers. The milk flows through

glass-lined steel pipe to the nearby milk house, where it is sterilized. The milk is then pumped to a separator, where the cream is removed. The cream is churned and afterwards salted, formed [into bricks], packed in paper, and stored in cases stamped with the farm's seal — all in a short time, and without having a human lift a finger or give it further thought!

While crude milking machines first appeared in the 1870s, the type of automatic machine described here is a far cry from anything then available. The first robotic machines did not become commercially available until the early 1990s. As for butter-making in 1909, it was a highly labour-intensive process. According to the book *Pioneer Days in Bardo, Alberta* (1944), making butter was no easy matter: "First, the butter was carefully washed to eliminate all the buttermilk.

Back then, air travel, telephone, and wireless radio communication were still new and amazing inventions

Then it was weighed and the correct amount of salt added. Next came the working of the salt into the butter and finally the printing and packing of the butter into fresh, clean boxes ... before they were stored on ... ice."

The manuscript also describes some smart-sounding farm machinery:

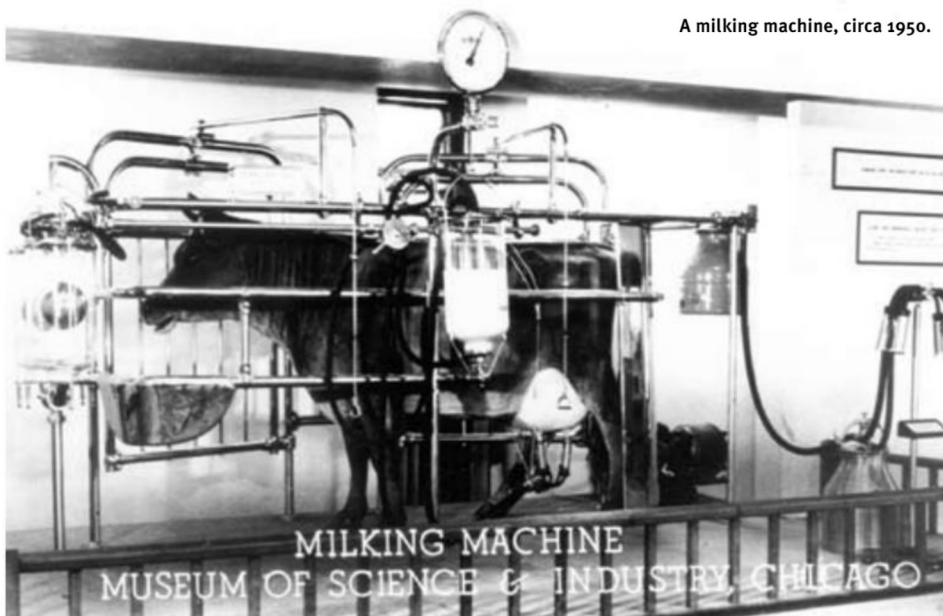
I saw an ingenious built-in threshing works where everything is done by machinery, so that all one needs to do is to oversee and direct. This equipment [harvests, threshes and] brings the grain to the storage bins so clean that it is ready for milling.

The author of the manuscript is unknown — it was probably Magda's father, a farmer in the Bardo area, or her uncle, a schoolteacher.

Whoever the writer was, the predictions of what the future of farming would be like are uncanny. 🐿

Gordon Hendrickson is a retired Lutheran minister living in Starbuck, Manitoba.

A milking machine, circa 1950.



A Hudson's Bay Company
cinematographer films the
Nascope for the company's
anniversary film *Romance of
the Far Fur Country* in 1919.



NORTHERN

In the early days of moviemaking, two companies competed to tell the story,
remembers the other film. by Chris Nikkel



EXPOSURE

O

n March 30, 1915, long before he became famous, Robert Flaherty was at Convocation Hall in Toronto, exhibiting a series of motion pictures taken of the Inuit near Baffin Island. In the audience, a reviewer kept his eye on one

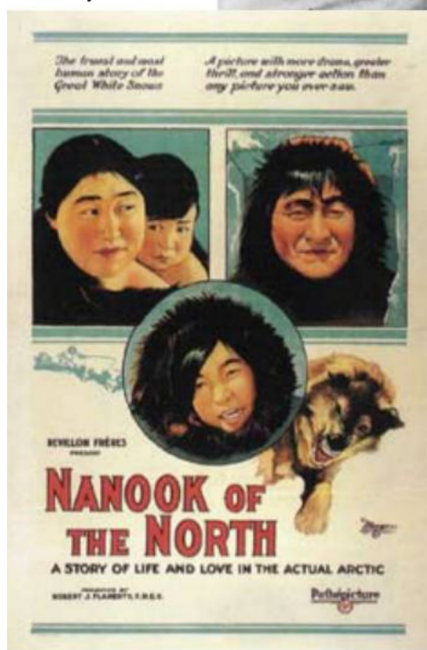
man, who, he observed, brandished “an occasional enormous yawn” while igloos and scenes of Inuit domestic life flickered in front of his eyes. The man was Sir William Mackenzie, the railroad magnate who was at that time exploring the feasibility of a rail line to move prairie wheat to Hudson Bay, from where it would be shipped to Europe. Mackenzie was also Flaherty’s employer.

Robert Flaherty would win acclaim seven years later for his film *Nanook of the North*, but on that spring evening at the University of Toronto campus he was still a prospector hired by Mackenzie to find minerals that a future rail line could carry back from Hudson Bay lands. The film footage, gathered while searching for ore deposits, focused on Inuit families in their day-to-day lives, whether eating breakfast or lighting oil lamps. Penniless, and recently married to Frances Hubbard — who would become his lifelong collaborator and play a huge role in his success — Flaherty hoped the northern footage would be enough to convince Mackenzie to bankroll another trip north — his fourth.

Despite Mackenzie’s yawns, the railroad man must have been impressed. Not only did he fund another expedition, he offered Flaherty an office in which to finish the film when he returned in September 1916. Flaherty cut and assembled his footage in the makeshift studio, preparing the final copy to send to New York in the hope of finding a distributor.

The negatives were in stacks and the extremely flammable nitrate film was wound tight on reels when the tobacco-smoking filmmaker made a catastrophic mistake: “Carelessly, amateur that I was, I dropped a cigarette off the table,” Flaherty recalled.

The small office ignited instantly. Rushing into the street with his clothes on fire, the filmmaker barely saved himself. He was so badly burned that he spent weeks in hospital. As for his 30,000 feet of original film, none of it survived. He was left with a single print, in poor condition.



MACCORD MUSEUM



Disheartened, but not defeated, Flaherty travelled to New York, hoping to sell the

Baffin Island print to someone willing to transfer it back to negative, an expensive process. To garner attention, he screened the print wherever he could. In 1918, he showed it to the New York Geographical Society, where he had a moment of realization. Watching many of the same scenes that Sir William Mackenzie had sat through three years earlier, Flaherty began to cringe. “It must have bored the audience to distraction,” he said later. “It certainly bored me.”

Bruno Wyers was in the audience the night of Flaherty’s epiphany, and he wasn’t bored at all. Wyers, the Hudson’s Bay Company agent for New York, was so taken by the film that, with the HBC’s 250th anniversary just two years away, he suggested borrowing the

H.M. Wyckpoff uses a hand cranked camera while balanced in a kayak to shoot *Romance of the Far Fur Country* in 1919.

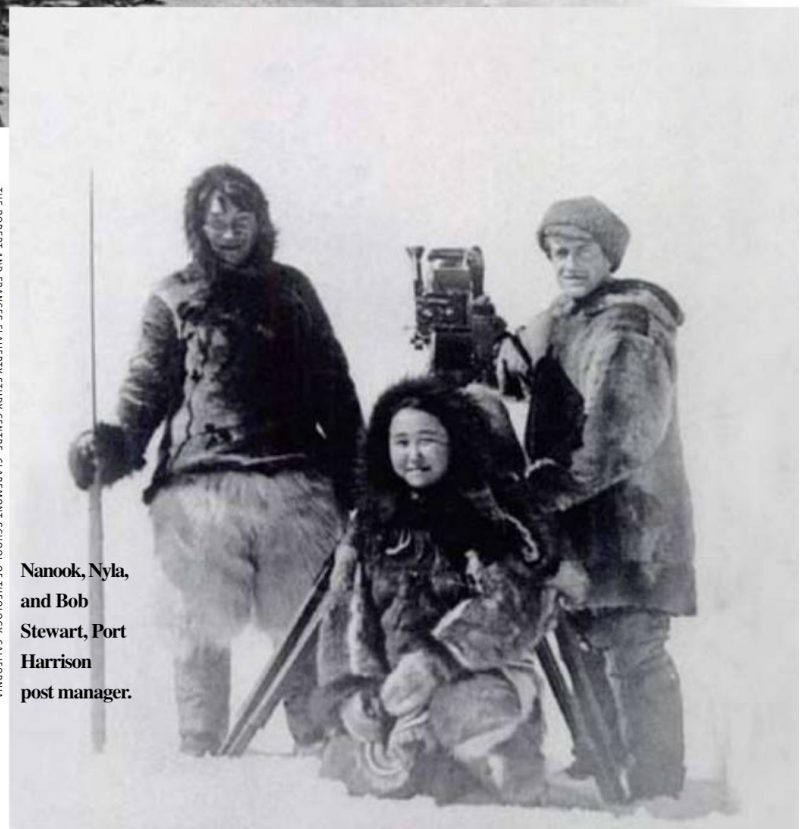


footage for the festivities.

Various anniversary commemorations were already underway, including a written history of the company, a gramophone recording of that history, and the inauguration of *The Beaver* magazine. The biggest gathering was slated for Winnipeg, the company's Canadian headquarters. The main attraction was to be a film depicting HBC activities in the North.

But rather than using Flaherty's footage, the HBC decided to shoot its own film. Flexing its corporate muscle, the HBC bought controlling interest in a film company in New York and selected H.M. Wyckoff, a former cameraman for the Red Cross in Russia, as chief cinematographer for the "moving picture expedition," as the HBC called it. At Wyckoff's disposal was the *Nascopie*, an HBC steamer. With film gear and crew on board, the *Nascopie* shoved off from Montreal in July 1919 with Captain George E. Mack ferrying them into Hudson Bay.

THE ROBERT AND FRANCES FLAHERTY STUDY CENTRE, CLAREMONT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, CALIFORNIA



Nanook, Nyla, and Bob Stewart, Port Harrison post manager.

Wyckoff shot film while docked at trading posts, from the *Nascope* deck, and sometimes even from a canoe or kayak. Using the technology of the time — a hand-cranked camera, black-and-white film, and no sound — he recorded fur trade life: the unloading of crates emblazoned with the HBC emblem; trappers trudging down traplines; fishermen hunched over holes in the ice; and even a marriage ceremony.

By the time Wyckoff completed filming at the end of December, he'd gathered 75,000 feet of film, some eighteen hours of viewing time. He rushed the negatives to New York where the editing began. By mid-April, a first draft clocked in at four hours. A month later it was cut in half.

Robert Flaherty was still in New York when *Romance of the Far Fur Country* premiered in Winnipeg. By then he had stopped peddling the Baffin Island print. He was preparing instead to reshoot the footage lost in the studio fire. This time, though, he was not going north as a mineral explorer, but as a full-time filmmaker.

Thierry Mallet had been to one of Flaherty's screenings. As president of the New York branch of Revillon Frères, a rival fur company to the HBC, Mallet was gearing up for an anniversary, too — Paris-based Revillon was celebrating two hundred years in business. Taking a page from the HBC, Mallet put Flaherty on a salary to produce a promotional film capturing the essence of the company, "one better than the recent anniversary of their rival," Flaherty noted. Flaherty could then cut his own film from the same footage.

In June 1920, Robert Flaherty left New York for a fur trade post at Port Harrison, on the shores of Hudson Bay. He arrived in early August, his thirty-nine crates of film gear barely escaping a dunking when the barge they were being transferred to almost sank in foul weather. Revillon Frères gave him a comfortable cabin with flower-print curtains, where he kept a gramophone, hung portraits of his heroes on the walls, and stored 75,000 feet of film stock. A ramshackle addition, tacked together with scrap lumber and driftwood, served as his developing room.

Flaherty gathered a dozen local Inuit for his film crew. He chose a main character, a well-known hunter named Allakariallak — who would be known in the film, and for posterity, as Nanook (which means polar bear in Inuktitut). Nanook also served as his developing room assistant. Other characters included Nanook's wife, Nyla, and the couple's young children.

Flaherty wanted to ensure that viewers of the film stayed awake, so he strove for plenty of action and suspense. He demanded complete creative control, especially during hunting scenes. "Do you know that you and your men may have to give up making a kill, if it interferes with my film?" he asked Nanook. His film star responded dutifully: "Not a harpoon will be thrown until you give the sign. It is my word."

Nanook's promise was tested during a walrus hunt on September 26. Though Nanook admitted it had been "many moons" since he'd hunted the animal, he followed Flaherty's orders, harpooning a two-thousand pound monster while it slept on the beach. Rudely awoken, the walrus wrestled itself into the sea and a dangerous tug-of-war ensued. As the frightened men slid toward the icy waters, "the crew called to me to use the gun but the camera crank was my only interest then and I pretended not to understand," Flaherty said later.

After developing footage, Flaherty often held public screenings, projecting his moving pictures onto a Hudson's Bay Company blanket hung in the kitchen of the fur post. At the walrus hunt screening, the audience members, many of whom had helped film the scene, were enthralled

A hunting scene from *Nanook of the North*.

'He told me he was terribly sorry, but it was a film that just couldn't be shown to the public.'

The completed film, entitled *Romance of the Far Fur Country*, premiered on May 23, 1920, at Winnipeg's illustrious Allen Theatre. The crowd was a mix of HBC store clerks, shoppers, and a hundred First Nations people in traditional clothing. The latter were unfamiliar with European theatre-going etiquette and interacted with the motion pictures, calling out "get your gun" or "shoot him" when animals appeared on screen.

It eventually played in London, where footage of white women models wearing HBC beaver fur coats was spliced into scenes on a trapline, a not-so-subtle reminder of the company that funded the film.

McCord Museum

as Nanook and his crew struggled for footing on the beach. “Every last man, woman, and child in the room was fighting that walrus,” Flaherty said of the screening.

Flaherty shot through the long, dark winter, except when it was so cold that the film would shatter into tiny particles the moment he turned the crank. Much film was lost to soot, the result of using soft coal to heat the stove in the film-drying room. Still more film was lost due to stray hairs from Nanook’s deerskin coat.

On April 29, 1921, Flaherty’s developing hut caved in, a major frustration as processing film on-site was no small feat: “The light of my little electric plant was not steady enough for the printing of the film,” Flaherty wrote in his journals. “To do that, I cut a hole in the wall of the hut and let the daylight in through a trap the exact size of the aperture of the printing machine.”

By the end of September, Flaherty was back in New York, putting his film together. The final version made little reference to the fur industry, nor to his sponsor, Revillon Frères, other than in the credits. The company was by then losing money and had started selling its fur posts to its rival. By 1936 the HBC held full control of Revillon Frères. As for the promotional film Flaherty was supposed to make for Revillon’s 200th anniversary, it seems to have been discarded.

Flaherty’s own film appeared destined for the same fate. His first screening was for the staff of Paramount, a potential distributor. With the projection room a haze of cigarette smoke, the manager “very kindly put his arm around my shoulders and told me that he was terribly sorry, but it was a film that just couldn’t be shown to the public,” Flaherty said of the event. The problem was, the film was not like anything they had seen before. It was not a travelogue of the North, nor was it an adventure story from an expedition. In all, five distributors rejected his film because they feared it would not sell. Finally, a Paris-based company, Pathé, agreed to take a chance.

To find a venue for the premiere, Pathé proceeded to “salt” the executive screening at New York’s biggest theatre, the Capitol. The staged audience clapped on cue, and the manager became more and more excited — when it ended, he called it a “masterpiece.”

Nanook of the North premiered at the Capitol Theatre on June 11, 1922, and became one of the most popular films of the summer. In London, Paris, and other European capitals, the film stayed in cinemas for six months or more. Commercial spinoffs included a soft drink called the “Nanook fizz,” “Igloo” refrigeration units and an ice cream bar with Nanook’s face on the wrapper. Within a few years, critics hailed Flaherty as the first “documentary” filmmaker, and today *Nanook of the North* is available on DVD, re-released by Criterion in 1999.

As for *Romance of the Far Fur Country*, it had a far shorter life in public memory. Visual historian Peter Geller is one of the few people alive to have



watched *Romance of the Far Fur Country* — at least, the footage that once made up the film. There are no known complete copies. “The film doesn’t exist as it did then,” Geller says of the footage, which is in pieces at the British Film Institute archive in London. Geller, author of *Northern Exposures: Photographing and Filming the Canadian North, 1920–45*, has a dream of reassembling it and placing a copy in the HBC archive where it belongs.

In Winnipeg’s trendy Exchange District, a few blocks from the now vacant Allen Theatre, a February film weekend, entitled *In the Shadow of the Company*, is planned at Cinematheque, the city’s arthouse theatre. On the bottom floor of a stone and brick warehouse built when Winnipeg was the western fur trade capital, screenings of rare HBC footage, dug out of the company archive across town, will take the audience on another journey north, a route similar to what *Romance of the Far Fur Country* took when it premiered, ninety years ago. Fittingly, *In the Shadow of the Company* is sponsored in part by *The Beaver* magazine. And in a twist of irony, the main ticket item is a screening of *Nanook of the North*.

First Nations people in traditional clothing were among those who watched the premier of *Romance of the Far Fur Country* at Winnipeg’s Allen Theatre in 1920.

Chris Nikkel writes creative non-fiction and documentary screenplays. He splits his time between Winnipeg and Ireland.

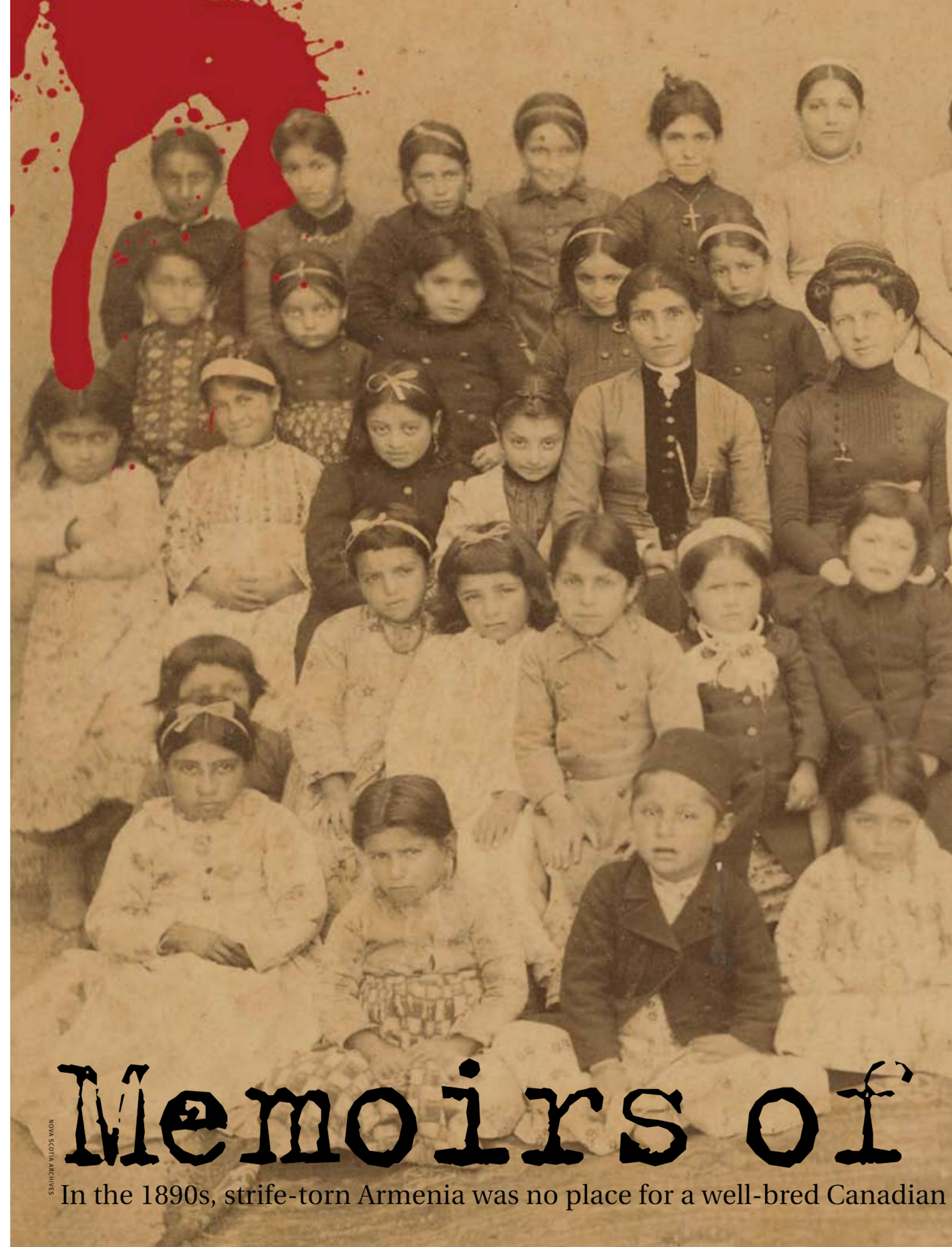
Et cetera

Robert and Frances Flaherty: A Documentary Life, 1883-1922. By Robert J. Christopher. McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 2005.

Northern Exposures: Photographing and Filming the Canadian North, 1920-1945 by Peter Geller. UBC Press, Vancouver, 2004.



For more about the film weekend and to listen to a podcast with Peter Geller, go to TheBeaver.ca.



Memoirs of

In the 1890s, strife-torn Armenia was no place for a well-bred Canadian

A class of children
in Van, Armenia. An
unidentified American
schoolteacher is sitting
in their midst. The pho-
to was probably taken
before the massacres
that began in 1894.

a Massacre

lady. But Katherine Bell Fraser was no ordinary woman. by Andria Hill

"My dear sister: Around us in the villages, the suffering is awful. The Kurds are acting like fiends incarnate, robbing and murdering on all sides..."

On the back of this undated portrait of Katherine Bell Fraser was written "Auntie Kate, Missionary." The poet Lord Byron (right) was Fraser's hero.



In 1892, a young woman from Canada journeyed to Turkey to teach school to Armenians, embarking on what she supposed would be a grand adventure. At first it was. But it soon became apparent that in the region in which she had landed, a horrifying conflict was about to boil over.

Rather than flee to safety, Katherine Bell Fraser insisted on staying to help where she could. Toward the end of her time there, Fraser's letters home and in her journal read like scenes out of hell: "My dear sister: Around us in the villages, the suffering is awful. The Kurds are acting like fiends incarnate, robbing and murdering on all sides..."

It was an unlikely letter from a young woman who grew up in genteel East Coast surroundings during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Fraser was a slight, fair-haired Methodist from Sherbrooke in southeastern Nova Scotia. Just how did she come to leave her comfortable surroundings and find herself in the middle of a massacre?

Perhaps it was in part due to the influence of one of her favourite poets, Lord Byron, who wrote in glowing terms of the Armenian people after his stay at a monastery there: "It would perhaps be difficult to find in the annals of a nation less crime than in those of this people," wrote Byron. Perhaps she chafed at the tedium of her job as a telegraph operator in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Perhaps, as a strong-willed Methodist, Fraser was eager to help the Armenian Christians who were under attack from the Muslim Kurds.

Whatever her reasons for going, Fraser's mettle helped her through some of the horrors she saw perpetrated on the Armenians during her sojourn in Turkey between 1892 and 1896. She took great personal risks in sharing her stories with the world.

Fraser's opportunity to serve came while visiting a cousin in Princeton, New Jersey. There, Fraser met Dr. Grace Kimball, well-known in her time for her work in the Armenian region of Turkey. Kimball was a leading figure with the Armenian Relief Committee based in New York and frequently spoke out about the atrocities taking place. She operated a small medical clinic, dispensary, and school in the city of Van and required women to staff it. Would Fraser be interested in helping the cause?

Fired with a renewed sense of purpose, young Katherine Bell Fraser lost no time in packing for the trip, despite the objections of her father and brothers (Fraser's

IMAGE COURTESY OF ANTIQUE-PRINTS.DE

NOVA SCOTIA ARCHIVES

Brief history of Armenia

Early History

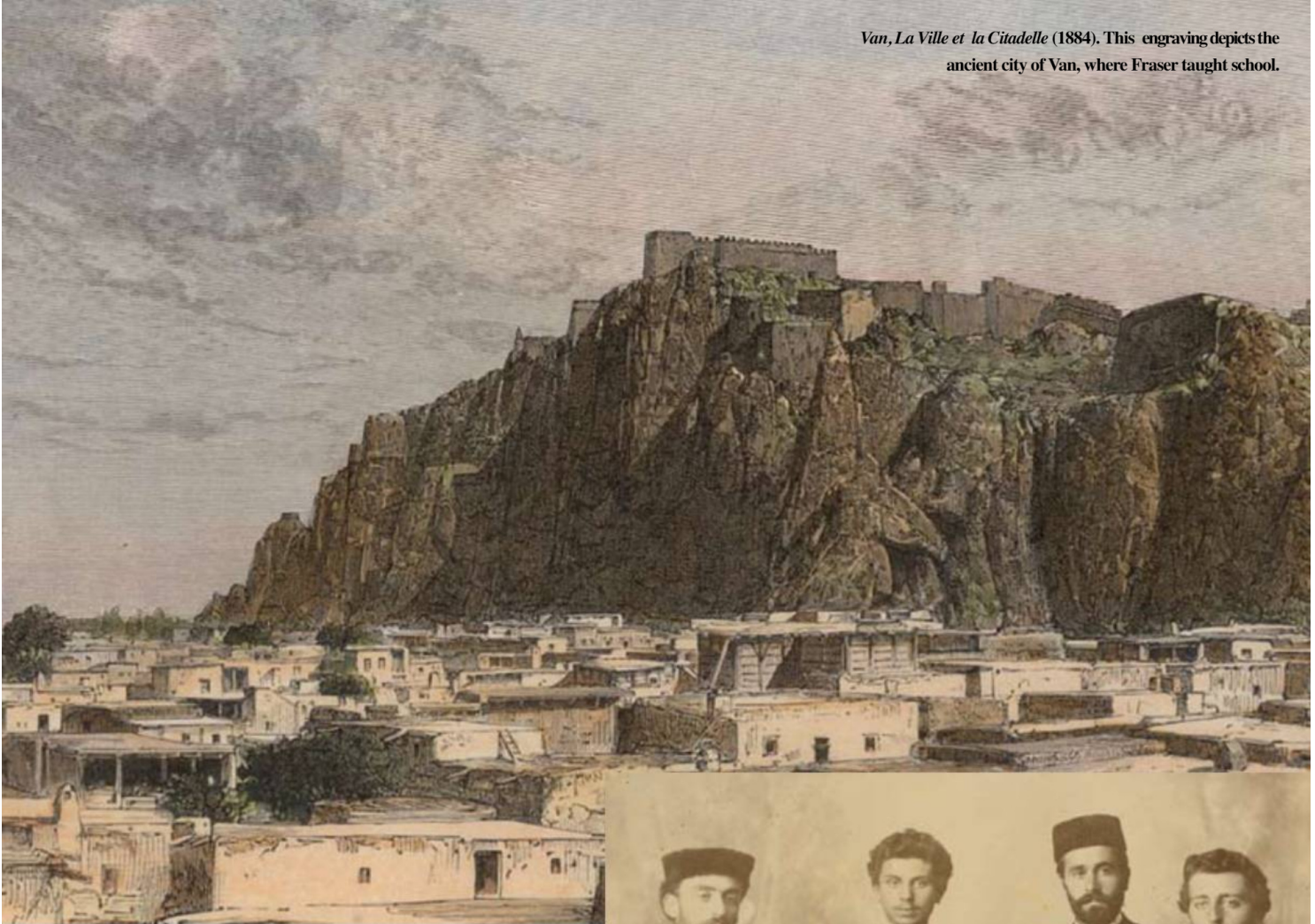
By tradition, Armenians are seen as descendants of the biblical Noah. The region included Mount Ararat, the mountain on which Noah's ark was said to have rested after the Flood.

301 CE

Armenia became the first state in the world officially to embrace Christianity as its religion. In the centuries that followed, neighbouring states fought for control of Armenia. Its borders changed frequently and it was often split into small principalities.

1453

Armenia was absorbed into the Ottoman Empire. Armenian Christians — a minority in a predominately Muslim region — periodically experienced discrimination, religious persecution, heavy taxation, and armed attacks.



mother had died ten years earlier). Fraser, at the age of twenty-five, was one of ten women in Kimball's company to sail on the SS *Werra* from New York to Europe in July 1892.

Fraser's first letters to her sister expressed excitement about the adventure ahead, although she did complain about seasickness. Her dry sense of humour came across in a passage in which she described being barred from a chapel in the port city of Genoa, Italy:

They have John Baptist buried in the church, remains brought from Palestine. No ladies allowed entrance to the chapel where he is kept because twas one who had him beheaded. Suppose we shall find his precious dust in several other churches before a week is over.

As the date for her arrival in Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) drew closer, she mentioned possible delays due to cholera. She reassured her sister and asked her to not share that news with their father, who apparently still



had not reconciled himself to his daughter's adventure.

Upon arrival in Constantinople, the party's belongings were subjected to a thorough search, which resulted in the confiscation of some precious items. Fraser lost a much-cherished volume of Byron's poetry. Dr. Kimball was relieved of her revolver and a medical text.

A month after their arrival in Constantinople, the women once again boarded a steamer, bound for Trebi-

A group of Armenian refugees photographed in England in the late nineteenth century.

1639

Greater Armenia was partitioned, with Western Armenia controlled by the Ottoman Empire, Eastern Armenia by Iran.

1828

Eastern Armenia became part of the Russian Empire.

1894-1896

After an Armenian liberation movement gained momentum in Western Armenia, Sultan Abdul-Hamid — known as the Red Sultan — responded by ordering systemic massacres that killed an estimated 200,000 Armenians.

zond (present-day Trabzon) on the northeastern coast of Turkey. A small welcoming party greeted them, waving two small American flags. As the only Canadian of the group, Fraser evidently felt slighted: "I told them I felt quite left out. I wasn't an American & they should have brought the Union Jack along as well," she wrote her sister.

At Trebizond the group began its journey overland to Van. It was October and the weather was growing colder. Undaunted, Fraser looked forward to the journey. Accommodations were rough, sometimes in tents and sometimes in stables, though on at least one occasion they found shelter in the home of a local governor, a residence so new that the plaster on the walls was still wet. But difficult conditions were the norm, and after a few days of cold, rain, snow, and travelling over rough terrain on horseback, with little sleep, Fraser began to lose heart.

years. Her diaries and letters described her routines and the people she met. For instance, she was invited to tea with the governor's harem, a prospect she greeted with eager curiosity.

She was also amused when Armenian women rejected Western medicine for treatment of "hysteria," preferring instead to apply a religious relic known as a "holy nail" (a nail believed used in the crucifixion of Christ) to the forehead of the afflicted woman.

She was not always complimentary of the customs and clothing of the local population. For this young Nova Scotian lady, the only proper and civilized way to look, behave, and dress was in a British fashion.

While her letters home were usually upbeat and descriptive — suggesting that she was well aware that her letters were intercepted and monitored by Turkish authorities — her diary entries present a different picture. One passage that was not included in letters home was written in May 1893:

On the 19th of May in a village in Verak almost in sight of their house, four young Armenian men were murdered & three girls assaulted by the Kurds. There had been some words over sheep & grass last year, which rankered & this year the bloody crime was committed. Two of the Kurds whom the girls knew by name have been arrested. The other four are at large. The trial is now going on & every day the girls are taken down to the court & great pressure is brought on them in order to make them swear the two men in prison had nothing to do with the murder & assault. Probably the result will be their acquittal.

As the years passed, risks grew. When a missionary compound in Bitlis, a town west of Van, came under attack, the occupants were incommunicado for several days. Alarm grew in Van. The reverend responsible for the Van mission determined the women should evacuate to Persia (present-day Iran), but Kimball and her women stood their ground. They stated that the wives and children of personnel should leave, but that the women who worked in the mission school and clinic would remain behind. The suggestion was accepted and Kimball's team remained a while longer. An entry in Fraser's diary in 1895 conveys in breathless, staccato rhythm the horror of a raid on villages that killed thousands:

Advent of troops welcomed by villagers as a guarantee of peace & protection from Kurds. Village turned out to welcome them & do them honour; speedily changed their minds. Troops opened fire on them & with rifle,



A landlocked region located at the crossroads between Asia and Europe, Greater Armenia (outlined in red) was home to one of the world's oldest civilizations. The present-day Republic of Armenia was formed in 1991.

Am sitting in the middle of a field just outside the village where we were put up for Sunday... The village is composed of Kurds, Turks & Armenians, the dirtiest & raggedest looking crowd imaginable & our stopping place is fearful. It is small & black with smoke, the ceiling thick with cob webs, the odor from the stable is vile. For the first time on the inland journey I cried myself to sleep & almost wished I was back in dear old Yarmouth. I dreamed all night about leaving home & was trying to decide whether to come or not hoping against hope that something would interfere to stop my coming & how when I awoke I found I had come & a long distance too from dear home friends.

The party reached Van at the end of November. An ancient city in eastern Turkey located on the shore of a lake, it was here that Fraser was based for the next several

1909

About 35,000 Armenians died in a massacre in the Adana region.

1915

Systemic massacres began that would take the lives of up to one and a half million Armenians. Today, more than twenty countries officially recognize these events as genocide, but modern-day Turkey denies there was a deliberate attempt to rid the country of Armenians.

1918-1920

Eastern Armenia declared independence in 1918 but was annexed by the Soviet Union two years later.

bayonet & sword made short work of them. General massacre then began. Troops, 9,000 regularly armed Kurds also. The poor Armenians only a few old rifles & old arms...

From the circumference of the region they worked in to the centre as huntsmen surrounding their game. Every village a scene of murder, rape & plunder for 16 to 21 days. Most savage work on Sultan's anniversary 29th August near Tadoorg. No pleading for quarter, no protest of innocence, or plea for women & children met with anything but torture & death. Troops not withdrawn until work thoroughly completed. 90 miles of a once prosperous region now a desert, crops destroyed. 32 villages razed, some say 40 & from 20,000 to 40,000 victims. Flocks & herds divided among the Kurds. Some stories of horror that tax the imagination.

In May of 1895, Fraser met a Mr. Howard, a correspondent who arrived in Turkey from Persia to report on the increasing slaughter of the Armenians. Howard evidently took a copy of the notes Fraser recorded in her diary, because they became the basis for a report that appeared in Boston and Yarmouth newspapers. In the spring of 1896, Fraser agreed to have some of the letters to her sister published in the Halifax *Chronicle* in return for a contribution to Armenian relief by the paper's editor and publisher.

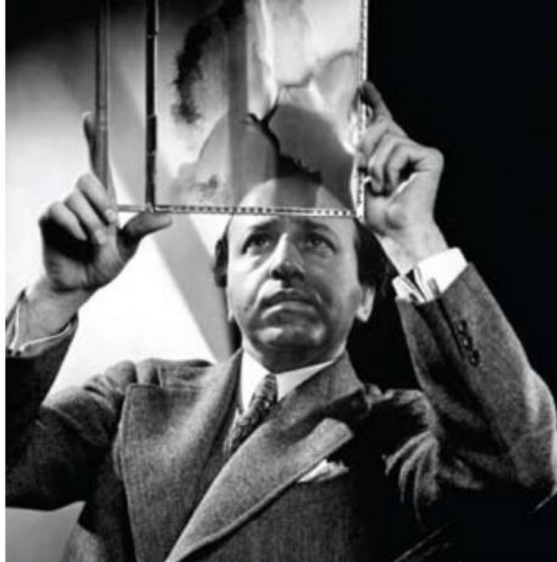
As the danger increased, Fraser rode her horse each day into the surrounding area to reassure teachers working outside the mission compound. Inside, at the boarding school, she reassured her young charges, who grew increasingly afraid as reports of rapes and abductions reached the mission:

The girls could not understand my tendency to laugh at every trivial saying this evening but they were reassured from my apparent lightheartedness that the rumors of massacre had no foundation. Dear girls. I wanted to cry for them & the only way to keep from doing so was to laugh.

On December 30, 1895, Fraser wrote to her sister: "The history of 1895 will not be very pleasant study for school children. Such a record seems altogether out of place in the 19th century."

The danger for Fraser grew. During a trip to Persia, Fraser and other members of her mission came under fire from Kurdish troops. A bullet grazed Fraser's ear, slicing off a piece of hair as it passed.

Eventually the mission in Van had to be abandoned altogether. In 1896, Fraser fled to Persia, then to England, then to Marseilles, then to Bulgaria, where she employed



CANADIAN PRESS

Armenians in Canada

Armenians started coming to Canada after the massacres of the late-nineteenth, early-twentieth centuries. Today, about 80,000 Canadians of Armenian descent live in Canada. Prominent Armenian-Canadians include movie director Atom Egoyan, opera singer Isabel Bayrakdarian, children's singer Raffi Cavoukian, and the late photographer Yousuf Karsh (above).

her fluent Armenian to help with an influx of refugees fleeing the carnage in Turkey.

Her letters between 1896 and 1897 expressed her need for a break. She wrote of headaches, exhaustion, and large doses of quinine (used to treat malaria). Eventually, Fraser came home on furlough. She was never to return.

After a short rest at home, Fraser grew restless and went on a speaking tour to raise money for Armenian relief. While in Boston in May 1899, she became ill with appendicitis. She recovered from surgery but two weeks later died suddenly, two days after her thirty-second birthday.

Her body had not left Boston for Halifax before tributes began to pour in. The *Chronicle* reported that when her casket arrived in Halifax, the flowers in it were as fresh as when they had been placed there — "a fitting symbol of the pure, sweet life gone from the earthly remains upon which they rested."

She was buried in her home village of Sherbrooke. The epitaph on her headstone is taken from a tribute paid to her by the British consul with whom she worked in Bulgaria: "She did a man's work with more than a man's capability." 🐾

Andria Hill is a writer living in Nova Scotia who has a passion for telling the stories of those whom history has often overlooked — the women.

1923

Turkey was established following the fall of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. Western Armenia was included within its borders.

1991

Eastern Armenia gained independence from the Soviet Union. Clashes with neighbouring states that have significant ethnic Armenian populations continue to the present day.

Today

About sixty per cent of the worldwide population of ten million Armenians live outside the country.

Mildred Valley
Thornton, circa
1950.



PORTRAIT OF A VANISHING ARTIST

LIKE EMILY CARR, MILDRED VALLEY THORNTON PLAYED A BIG ROLE IN PRESERVING NATIVE HISTORY THROUGH ART. UNLIKE CARR, SHE FADED INTO OBSCURITY. *BY SHAY WILSON*

At the age of seventy-seven, Mildred Valley Thornton looked back on her achievements. Her oeuvre was impressive — hundreds of paintings, most of them striking portraits of First Nations people from the Plains and the West Coast, dating from the 1920s to the 1960s. She'd received honours and recognition. She was a fellow of the British Royal Society of Arts. She was a respected art critic. She had published a book (a second book was published posthumously). Her paintings had been internationally exhibited.

Another person might have felt satisfied with these accomplishments, but Thornton was bitterly disappointed. Since the beginning of her career, she had refused to sell any of her portraits, even though they were in high demand. She wanted the Canadian government to one day purchase the entire collection on behalf of the public and to acknowledge the historical importance of her contribution. But when that day came, the Canadian government refused to buy it.

Angry and hurt, Thornton made a drastic decision — she would have every last painting in the collection burned. She wrote a provision into her will to do just that....

Peter Weasel-Skin was sitting outside his teepee in full regalia, peacefully smoking his pipe in the warm sunshine,” Mildred Valley

Thornton wrote about the first native man she painted at the Regina Fairgrounds in 1928. “As I worked,” she recalled, “old women in colourful shawls crowded around me in eager curiosity, thrusting their heads so close to my paint box that I could hardly get my brush in for a refill. ‘Tsh, tsh, tsh,’ they kept saying over and over again. This was something they had never seen before.”

This first portrait was the beginning of a lifelong obsession — one that would take her to the remotest parts of Western Canada to paint hundreds of First Nations people from various communities and record their stories. Thornton made a point of searching out old people who had been a part of the region's early history. In many cases her paintings are the only visual likenesses of important historical figures in existence.

Her work echoed that of her near-contemporary Emily Carr. But Thornton loathed superficial comparisons to Carr. Thornton primarily painted portraits and Carr landscapes. Thornton intended her art to be accessible and educational.

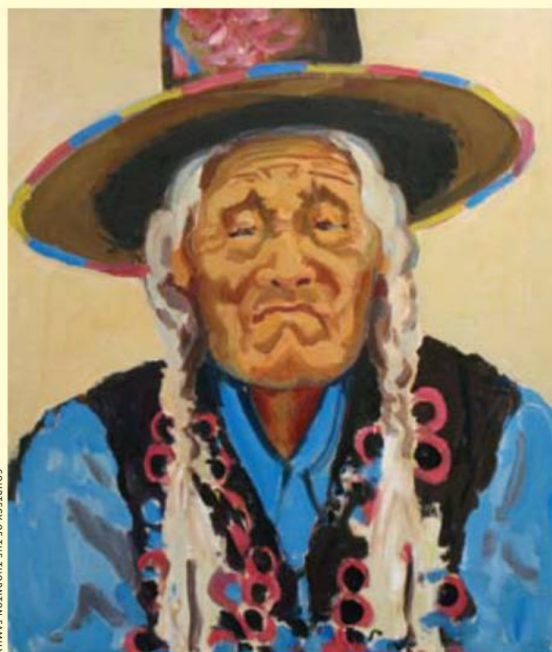
Carr's could be viewed as more internal and spiritual. Yet, they had so much in common — both women worked tirelessly to advance the interests of First Nations people and both compel us to acknowledge the importance of aboriginal culture and tradition to Canada through their art. There is no doubt that Thornton's contributions to Canada are as significant as Carr's and she was well known in her lifetime. So why is this prolific artist not a household name today?

She was born Mildred Stinson in Dresden, Ontario, in 1890. The Lenape natives who visited her family's farm to sell handwoven baskets fascinated her as a child, long before she took up painting. Artistic talent was in her blood — her aunt, Evelyn Beatrice Longman, was a renowned American sculptor. Mildred attended art school at Olivet College in Michigan — the same school her aunt had attended.

Far right:
*Indian village
near Fort
Babine (1945).*

Right:
*Chief Eustace
Crazy Dog,
Kootenay
(1949).*

Below:
*Chief Jessea,
Kitimat (date
unknown).*



COURTESY OF THE THORNTON FAMILY

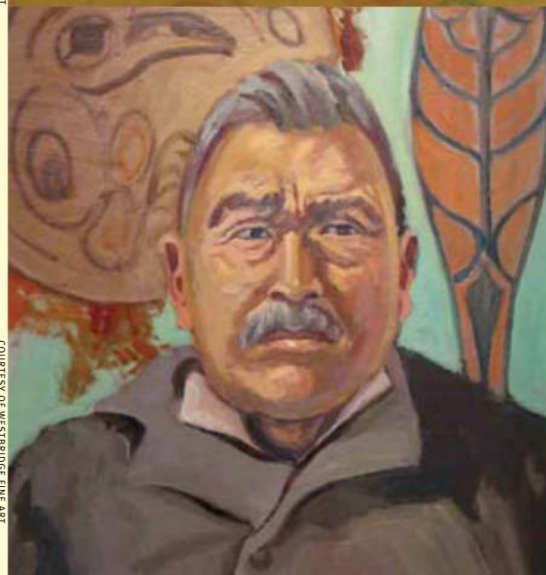
She continued her studies at the Ontario School of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago.

She moved to Regina on her own in 1913 and married John Henry Thornton, a bakery owner, in 1915. Twin sons, Jack and Maitland, were born in 1925. The boys were still toddlers when she began painting her first aboriginal portraits.

"Sometimes she had to take my brother and I with her [on painting trips] because there was nowhere else to park us," recalls Jack Thornton, who is now in his eighties. "My brother and I were quite at odds with the Indian children. They used to make fun of us because we didn't understand them and they didn't understand us." He laughs, adding, "I don't think this made much difference to my mother, who just went ahead and painted and painted."



COURTESY OF WESTBRIDGE FINE ART



COURTESY OF WESTBRIDGE FINE ART



The boys lived with their mother and the First Nations people of the Plains in teepees for weeks at a time. Thornton herself wrote, "I look back and wonder how I did it, but I'm convinced of one thing: given a modicum of health, you can find time for anything you want to do, no matter how many difficulties may confront you."

What motivated her to undertake this monumental task? She evidently admired the people she painted. "They identify themselves far more with nature's forces than we do. I think it is this affinity they enjoy with animals and birds and all the life and growth around them, that attracts me so much to the Indians," she said in a *Vancouver Sun* article. She realized their culture was inevitably changing. "I began to develop an uncontrollable urge to paint the Indians and to record everything I could on canvas."

By the 1930s, her work was well-publicized. A *Saturday Night* article written in 1934 was typical of the sort of press she received as a female artist — it gave her domestic achievements equal space on the page with her artistic ones. "She can bake, wash, iron and make angel cake," the writer gushed.

Her son Jack remembers otherwise. "My mother was anything but a homemaker. She used to have a room in the house that was her studio. In any other house it would have been the dining room."

The Depression hit the family hard, and in 1934 they moved to Vancouver for a fresh start. Thornton moved her creative focus to British Columbia.

She went on wilderness expeditions, toting heavy gear, wet paintings, and occasionally a projector (to show past work). She travelled with whomever was



Thornton's status as a self-appointed ambassador between cultures is seen today as problematic and complex. For instance, she wrote articles in support of residential schools in the 1940s. This seemed right to her, as she lived in a time when fewer than a dozen B.C. First Nations children graduated from Grade 9 annually. Her writings about native people are often unintentionally patronizing, and overly romantic, but that's how everyone portrayed them at the time.

However, her artwork and good relationships with the First Nations people show her genuine regard for them. "I never posed my subjects," she wrote, "just watched what they did naturally, and that is what I painted." She also paid people fairly for their sitting time.

She worked quickly to capture essential details of a face in a simple, realistic style. Looking at the portraits of Kitimat Chief Jessea, Chief Ben Pasqua of the Salteaux, or Kootenay Chief Eustace Crazy Dog, one can instantly discern these people were important members of their communities through Thornton's skilled portrayal of their expressions and features.

She also stayed involved in the lives of the people she painted, sometimes helping them find work or buying them groceries. She befriended many First Nations artists and promoted their work. The Cree gave her the name Owas-ka-esk-ean, meaning "putting your most ability for us Indians."

Through her writing it is obvious that one of the things she respected and envied most about her aboriginal friends was the position of the artist in their societies. Thornton wrote in 1943: "Haida

Above: Mrs. Ben Pasqua, Salteaux (date unknown). In her books *Potlatch People* (1966) and *Buffalo People* (2000) she describes numerous adventures.

Right:

An early self-portrait of Thornton.

Far right: Chief Ben Pasqua, Salteaux (date unknown).



Thornton received offers from around the world to purchase her portraits, but she refused them all.

bad weather and found herself hopping between three different boats en route, only to be soaked by a freezing wave while heading ashore. As she didn't want to miss her chance with the chief, Thornton used her palette knife to rip off the wet part of her slip. She then stuffed paint rags down the back of her girdle to absorb moisture before sitting down to work.

"I found that in this field of art you have to seize the opportunity where and when it is offered and pour every ounce of energy into one supreme effort," Thornton wrote in the preface to *Potlatch People*. "Your own comfort and convenience simply [don't] matter."

artists were not merely odd people to be tolerated and excused as white artists are, they were among the most important folk in the tribe, for only they were capable of translating into material form the cherished symbols of the race."

Thornton received offers from around the world to purchase her portraits, but she refused them all. She had bigger plans for what she called "the Collection." Thornton wanted the Canadian government to purchase the collection on behalf of the people of Canada for \$100,000.

"She always thought she was making a contribution to Canada," says Jack Thornton. "She

COURTESY OF THE THORNTON FAMILY



thought for her life's work \$100,000 wouldn't be too exorbitant. Nowadays, that's nothing."

She intended to give this money to the First Nations people. The Canadian government was initially interested in her work, but only if it was given as a donation. Thornton could not accept this. After negotiating for years, it became apparent the government did not want the portraits. The embittered Thornton finally had a codicil added to her will to ensure the paintings would be burned upon her death.

Thornton also found professional trouble within the Vancouver art community. Her strong negative opinions of what she called "ultra-modern art" frequently made their way into the *Vancouver Sun*, where she worked as an art critic from 1943 to 1959.

"If artists expressed themselves verbally with the same degree of profanity that they use with a brush, jail space would be at a premium," she wrote in the *Sun* in 1947.

Thornton believed art should be intellectually accessible to anyone. In the 1940s, Group of Seven member Lawren Harris, who had recently moved to Vancouver, and B.C. artist Jack Shadbolt, both changed their painting styles from representational to abstract. Thornton reviewed them harshly.

"They would have disagreements with each other that sometimes became quite vicious," says Jack Thornton. "Their animosity appeared in print often." Mildred Valley Thornton also got on the bad side of two powerful people: Shadbolt's wife Doris, who held an influential position with the Vancouver Art Gallery, and artist B.C. Binning, one of the founders of the University of British Columbia's fine arts department.

"[Thornton] had exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery prior to all this," says art dealer Anthony Westbridge, an advocate of Thornton's work who has done much to restore her reputation in the art world. "After that they basically blacklisted her."

Westbridge speculates that the Vancouver art community's influence extended to Ottawa. "They possibly even had something to do with the National Gallery turning down her collection. ... [The gallery] would have been very quickly told to forget about her." Fortunately, the codicil on Thornton's will was not properly witnessed. Thus, the paintings were not destroyed. However, the collection was broken apart and sold when she died in 1967. Some of it is now in the hands of private collectors, some is in notable galleries and museums, but the entire collection has never been exhibited together as the artist intended.

In an early self-portrait, Mildred Valley Thornton looks out of the canvas with piercing blue eyes. She wears a beaded native headdress with pink flowers pinned at the sides. She looks like a woman capable of achieving whatever she wants.

However, she didn't achieve what she wanted most — assurance that her collection would remain whole and forever belong to the Canadian public. But, as she wrote in the year before her death, she felt a great sense of purpose in her accomplishments:

"I am filled with gratitude that I was privileged to do this work at the last possible time that anyone could do it, recording a colourful and important phase and era of Canadian history."

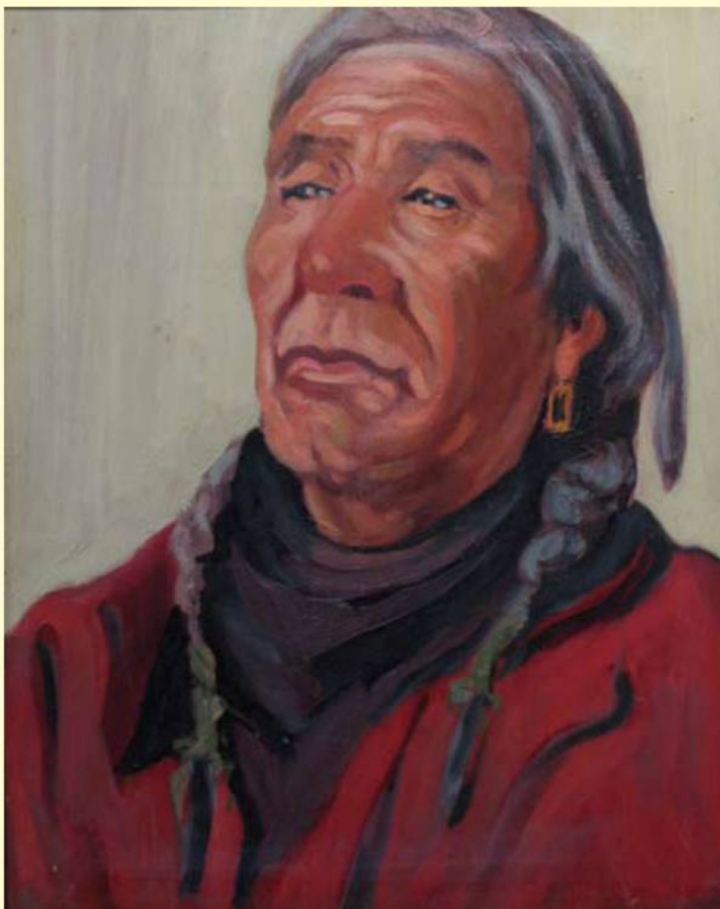
Shay Wilson lives in Vancouver and recently completed her MFA in creative writing.

Et Cetera

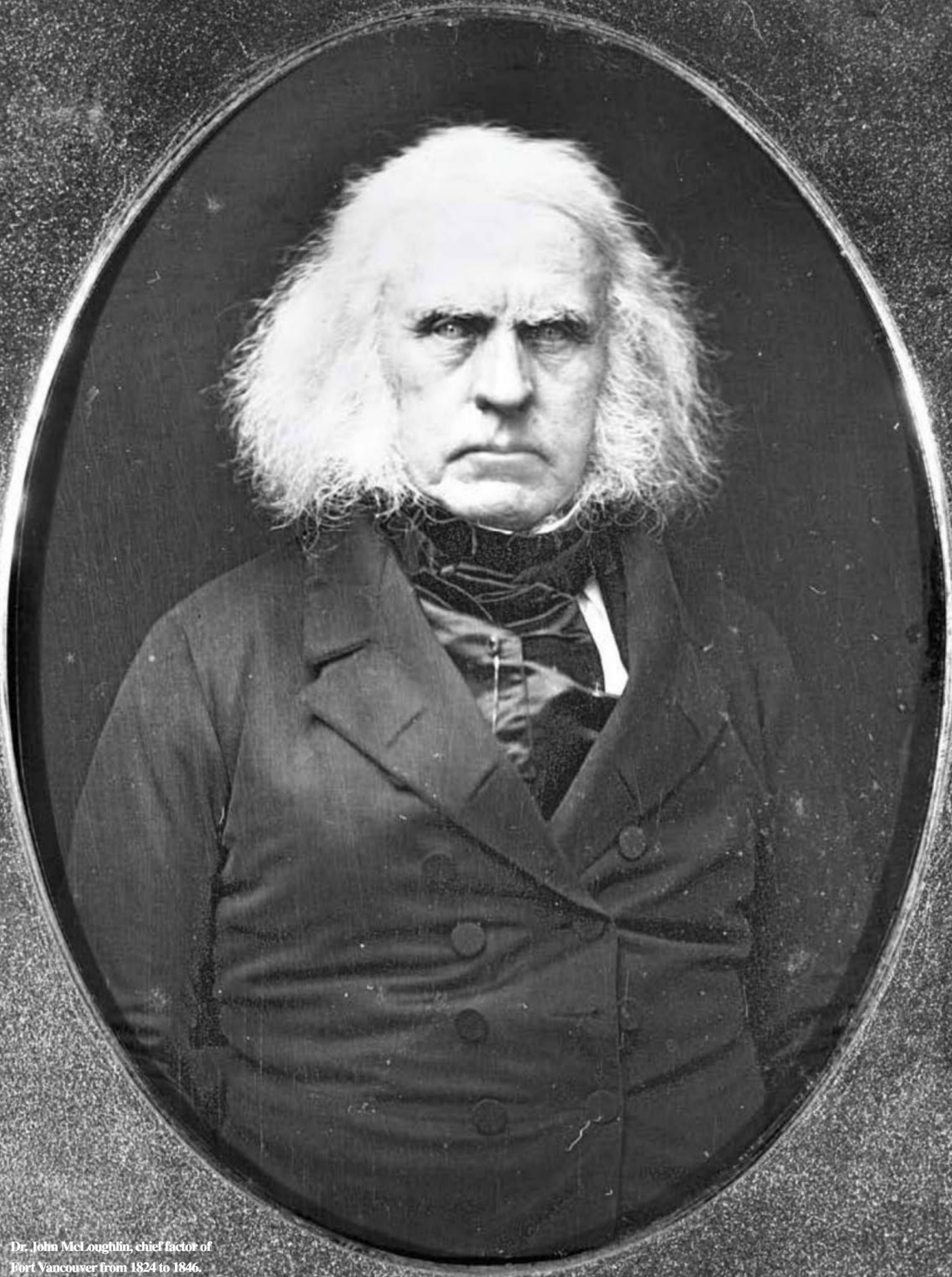
Potlach People: Indian Lives and Legends of British Columbia by Mildred Valley Thornton, Hancock House, Surrey, B.C., 2002 (first published as *Indian Lives and Legends* by Mitchell Press in 1966).



For more about Mildred Valley Thornton, listen to a podcast at TheBeaver.ca.



COURTESY OF THE THORNTON FAMILY



Dr. John McLoughlin, chief factor of
Fort Vancouver from 1824 to 1846.

GENTLEMEN SPIES

The two young British dandies seemed wildly out of place in the Columbia District of 1845. Seemingly on holiday, they were in fact preparing for war.

by Stephen R. Bown

Chief factor Dr. John McLoughlin looked on in astonishment as two travelling gentlemen from England and their accompanying host of voyageurs arrived in Fort Vancouver on the morning of August 26, 1845. Even in their dusty and worn travelling clothes, it was clear they were men of standing, a cut above the usual desperate settler who came to this far-flung Hudson's

Bay Company outpost. Certainly their arrival was unexpected. Sportsmen of leisure landing at the fort from east of the Continental Divide were highly unusual, given that there was no road and little incentive to make such an arduous overland trek.

The two young travellers introduced themselves as Henry James Warre and Mervin Vavasour, British gentleman out from Montreal to enjoy the scenery and customs of the Columbia District — HBC fur-trading territory jointly controlled by the United States and Britain that included much of present-day British Columbia, as well today's American states of Washington, Oregon, and part of Idaho.

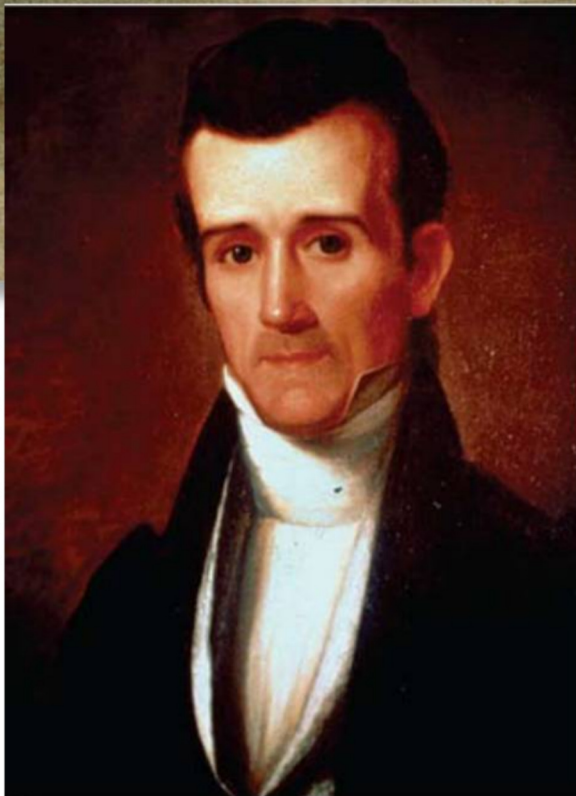
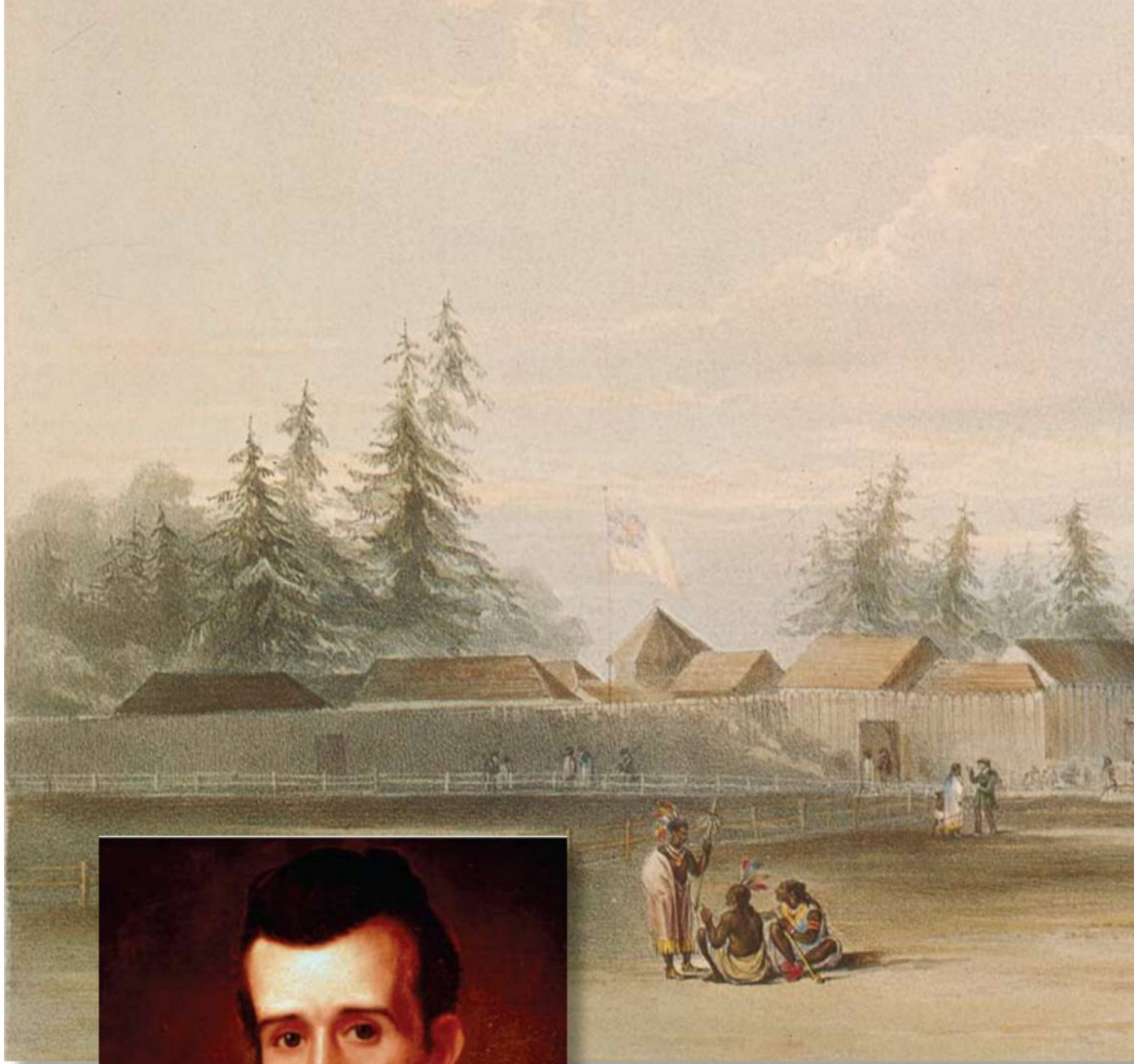
After replacing their tattered clothing with new and expensive tweeds and beaver hats, the pair settled down for nearly a year of touring the region. An astute observer might have found their interests and choice of activities a trifle unusual.

Warre was frequently in front of his easel painting, while Vavasour had a peculiar fascination with the view from commanding hills, the location and dimensions of structures and buildings, the exact elevation of promontories, and the location of freshwater sources. Fort Vancouver, the largest settlement and the nucleus of British presence for the entire region, was of particular interest to the amiable yet eccentric pair.



"The Fort," wrote Warre in his journal, "is badly situated as regards defence — being commanded by a ridge of Ground running the whole length of the Plain & extending along the bank of the River. ... It is surrounded by strong pickets 15ft in height 220 yds long by 100 deep at the N. West Angle is a square block house, supporting an octagonal upper story containing several small Guns." Odd commentary for an aimless civilian pleasure seeker.

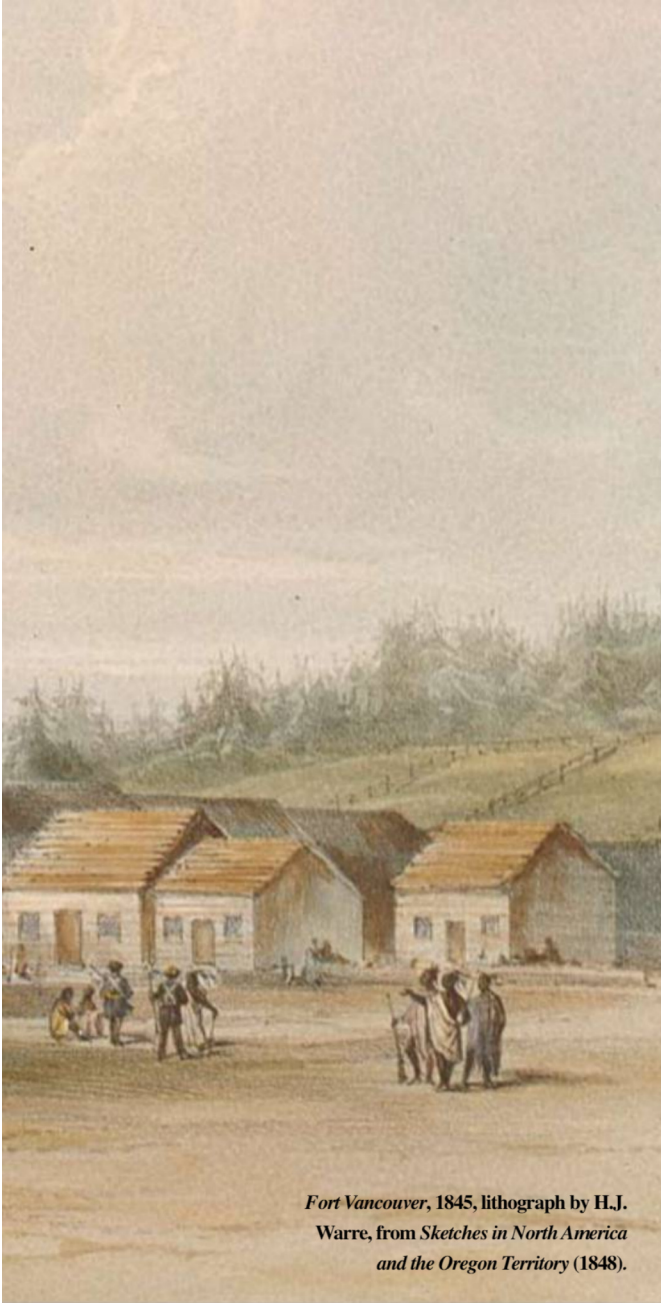
Anyone who troubled to inspect Warre's full repertoire of sketches and paintings would have observed a pattern of peculiar themes and content. There were no portraits, few scenes of the colourful voyageurs or native peoples, no drawings of strange and exotic plants. But there was an abundance of scenery of a specific sort — outcroppings, river junctions, forts, with elevation plans and assessments of their defensibility in case of conflict — but what conflict?



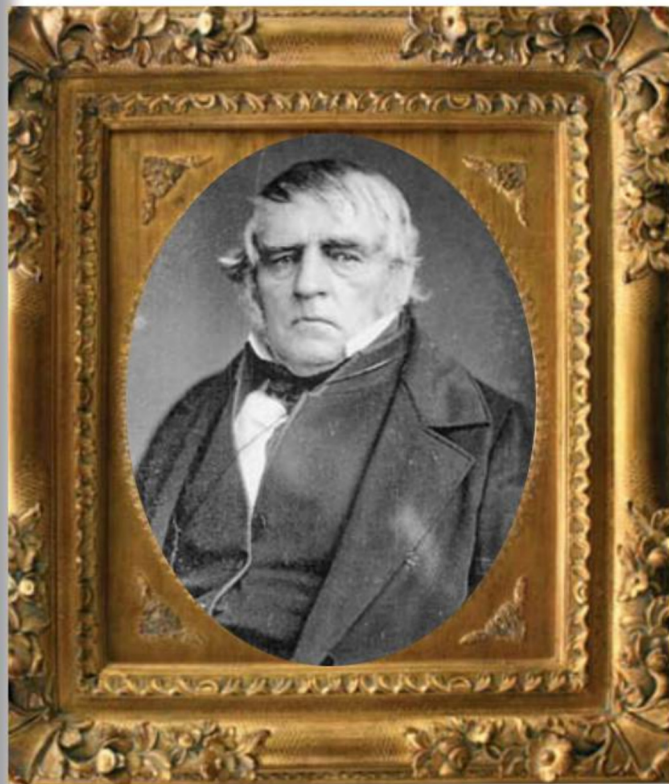
U.S. President
James Knox
Polk was elected
on a campaign
to claim all the
territory on
the West Coast
from Alaska to
Mexico.

McLoughlin was not abo off the land or watch the

Back in 1818, Britain and the United States had agreed to jointly occupy what became known as Old Oregon — all territory north of Spanish California, south of Russian Alaska, and west of the Rocky Mountains. But in reality, Old Oregon, which the British referred to as the Columbia District, remained the sole preserve of the Hudson's Bay Company. The vast territory, populated mainly by about 80,000 native peoples from various nations, was managed by a series of rude palisade forts loosely strung together along established canoe routes and seasonal mule paths.



*Fort Vancouver, 1845, lithograph by H.J. Warre, from *Sketches in North America and the Oregon Territory* (1848).*



Peter Skene Ogden, the guide for the British spies, was described as a “a fat jolly good fellow.”

British or American — so long as they didn't undermine his authority or overtly threaten the fur trade.

The character of the region began to change in the 1840s, when an endless stream of baggy, cloth-covered wagons slowly plodded their difficult way west. The people in these wagon trains were American colonists; they were coming to settle on land that until then had been primarily hunting and trapping territory. They travelled along 6,400 kilometres of rutted tracks, trekking across barren, windblown plains, ascending alpine passes, following the shores of raging rivers through red-rock canyons, and bypassing foaming cataracts, before ending, more or less, at Fort Vancouver.

McLoughlin had a soft heart when it came to these American colonists, who were arriving at a rate of more than a thousand a year. Destitute, on the verge of starvation, and ill-prepared for the coming winter, the settlers were given credit at the company store. McLoughlin politely directed them south of the Columbia River to the Willamette Valley.

While transforming the wilderness into ranch land was not in the best interests of the fur trade, McLoughlin was not about to drive the Americans off the land or watch them starve. He also realized that a private company could not long remain the only official authority in the region; without help from the British government, holding Old Oregon would be impossible.

As settlers continued pouring in, American political interest in the region grew. In 1844, the ardently expansionist President James Knox Polk was elected on the Demo-

For the next twenty years or so, little happened to disturb the HBC's authority in the region. It was in effect ruled by McLoughlin, the HBC's chief factor at Fort Vancouver, who ran the Columbia District like an old-time robber baron. He was shrewd, cunning, paternalistic, and sometimes ruthless. He held court in the shadowy depths of a great timber hall behind a primitive palisade, and dispensed justice according to the dictates of his own conscience — alternately with vengeful wrath or surprising leniency as the mood was upon him.

McLoughlin opened the gates of his fort to all manner of travellers and wanderers — both aboriginal and white,

ut to drive the Americans m starve.

A war over Oregon would not be limited to the distant Pacific, but would likely be fought as an invasion of Canada.

cratic campaign slogans “Fifty-Forty or Fight” — referring to the latitude of the northern boundary with Alaska, then held by Russia — and the “re-annexation of Texas and re-occupation of Oregon.” These threatening slogans did not bode well for British sovereignty in the territory.

Enter Warre and Vavasour.

In early 1845, General Sir Richard Downes Jackson, commander of all the British forces in North America,



A large area of the Pacific Northwest was jointly held by Britain and the United States from 1818 to 1846. The Americans called the region Old Oregon, while the British referred to it as the Columbia District. The Oregon Boundary Treaty of 1846 fixed the international boundary at the forty-ninth parallel.

selected two young lieutenants for a clandestine military reconnaissance in the Oregon Territory. The first was twenty-six year old Warre. A well-travelled officer marked for distinction, Warre was a graduate of the prestigious Sandhurst military academy and aide-de-camp to Jackson, as well as being a talented artist. Warre's companion, twenty-four-year-old Mervin Vavasour, was a new lieutenant with the Royal Engineers. Their orders called on them to “obtain as accurate a knowledge of (the Oregon Territory) as may be requisite for the future and efficient prosecution of Military operations in it, should such operations become necessary.”

Their mission was to scout the region, then take pos-

session of Cape Disappointment at the mouth of the Columbia River (in present-day Washington State) and any other sites deemed useful in the event of a war. War seemed more possible as the months passed.

On May 5, 1845, the two undercover gentlemen joined a Hudson's Bay Company fur brigade led by veteran trader Peter Skene Ogden as it forged west from Montreal. In early June they reached Fort Garry (in present-day Winnipeg) after a Herculean trek. After a short rest, they acquired horses and set off across the trackless domain of the prairies.

In their journals, the two grumbled about the quality of the food, the difficulty of the travel, the unruly behaviour of the voyageurs, and the “savage and dirty Indians.”

Of their guide Ogden, Warre wrote that he was “a fat jolly good fellow, reminding me of Falstaff, both in appearance and wit. ... strongly in favour of all the Indian Customs.” Although he described him as an amusing and entertaining travelling companion, Warre also declared with distaste that Ogden had “a very Republican Spirit.”

The discriminating gentlemen trotted west, arriving at the snowcapped ridge of the Rocky Mountains. What most would consider awe-inspiring failed, at first, to move Warre, the condescending world traveller: “Had I not seen Switzerland, I should have been much more struck, but I had allowed my imagination too much scope [and] I was on the whole disappointed.”

Ogden led the pair through the mountains and over the Continental Divide through what Warre called “really beautiful” scenery as they occasionally hunted and fished. Eventually they reached the Columbia River near Revelstoke and floated in boats downriver to Fort Vancouver, where they were welcomed by McLoughlin, who, with his stern countenance, shock of long white hair, and six-foot-four height, presented an imposing figure.

Relieved to be in a spot of modest civilization, Warre and Vavasour bolstered their cover by making extravagant purchases at the company store, including fine beaver hats, tweed pants and coats, hairbrushes, and rose-water perfume. Now looking more like the dandies they were supposed to be, they got to work.

During the next year they huddled around smouldering fires, took shelter inside leaky log huts at HBC forts, stalked along muddy roads in the dreary mist and rain, and sweltered over mountain passes in the dust and heat of high summer.

Every place they visited they described as incapable of defence, poorly situated, or with inadequate water supplies. At Cowlitz Farms, a small settlement near Fort Nisqually (on Puget Sound in present-day Washington State), even the Catholic Church, the only defensible structure in the region, “was in want of loopholes” for guns. Warre described Oregon City as tainted by the lawlessness of the citizens, but he noted in his journal that “a small force could overawe the present American population and obtain any quality of cattle to supply the troops in other parts of the country.”

Warre and Vavasour eventually purchased land surrounding Cape Disappointment from an American settler and drew up detailed plans for its defence.

Throughout it all, the two lieutenants were impressed with the exotic world around them. They observed Mount Hood “in all its majesty & snowy Grandeur.” Warre was amazed when, from the conical top of Mount St. Helens, “suddenly a long black Column of Smoke & Ashes shot up into the Air, and hung as a Canopy over the dazzling Sky behind it ... the first Volcano I have ever seen in action.” Their reports, sent to London via Montreal, were not encouraging.

They noted that American citizens were the primary inhabitants of the region (other than the tens of thousands of native peoples who were conveniently overlooked by the eastern imperial powers). The number of Canadian settlers in the territory never amounted to more than a few hundred, mostly employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. Warre recognized the future in these demographics and blamed the situation on chief factor McLoughlin, saying he gave too much help to American newcomers.

“We are convinced,” Warre wrote in his report, “that without their assistance not 30 American families would now have been in the settlement.”

Angered by the report, McLoughlin wrote a lengthy reply to his superiors, stating that he had no choice but to help the desperate settlers. Otherwise they would have attacked the fort to get what they needed, which would have ruined the company's interests in the region and possibly precipitated a war. “As a Good and faithful Subject it was my Duty to do my Utmost to maintain peace and order Between the British Subjects and American Citizens,” McLoughlin wrote. The company did not buy his arguments and planned to transfer him to another post and cut his salary. McLoughlin resigned in disgust in 1846. He lived out his days in Oregon, where he is known to this day as the “Father of Oregon.”

Warre's report was also critical of Sir George Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, who believed that regular British army troops could be brought to defend the territory via the tortuous fur trade route through the mountains.

With their work done in the spring of 1846, Warre and Vavasour departed Fort Vancouver with the eastbound fur brigade. Meanwhile, the political situation in Old Oregon, unbeknownst to the inhabitants, was gathering tension. President Polk had persuaded the U.S. Congress to end the joint-occupancy accord in December of 1845. Declaring the entire region America's, he made rumblings of war. Meanwhile, Britain sent a warship, HMS *America*, to patrol the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

War seemed imminent. But in the end, cooler heads prevailed.

British officials knew that a war over Oregon would

Manifest Destiny



U.S. President James Monroe

The belief that the United States was divinely destined to control all of North America arose out of the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. President James Monroe told Congress that any foreign intervention in the affairs of the Americas (including South America) would be viewed as an assault on the United States. Journalist John L. O'Sullivan expanded the concept in 1845, saying it was the nation's “manifest destiny to overspread the continent

allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly Multiplying millions.” Manifest destiny became the rallying cry of American expansionists and was used to justify the expropriation of Indian lands, the war with Mexico between 1846 and 1848, and President James Knox Polk's claim to what is now British Columbia.

not be limited to the distant Pacific, but would likely be fought as an invasion of Canada. They figured it was not worth fighting for a depleted fur preserve that was already occupied by unruly American citizens.

Polk was not especially eager to antagonize Britain, either. He was already faced with an impending war with Mexico over Texas. The two sides eventually agreed that all of Vancouver Island would remain British and that everywhere else, the forty-ninth parallel would serve as the boundary. The agreement was formalized under the Oregon Boundary Treaty of June 1846.

Historians are unsure of the exact influence Warre and Vavasour's reports and dispatches had on the border settlement — their final report was received in London too late to directly influence the border negotiations. But undoubtedly they contributed to the growing body of information that led negotiators to settle on the border as we now know it.

What their reports did was provide a graphic window, however brief and selective, into a region on the cusp of dramatic political and social change. 🦫

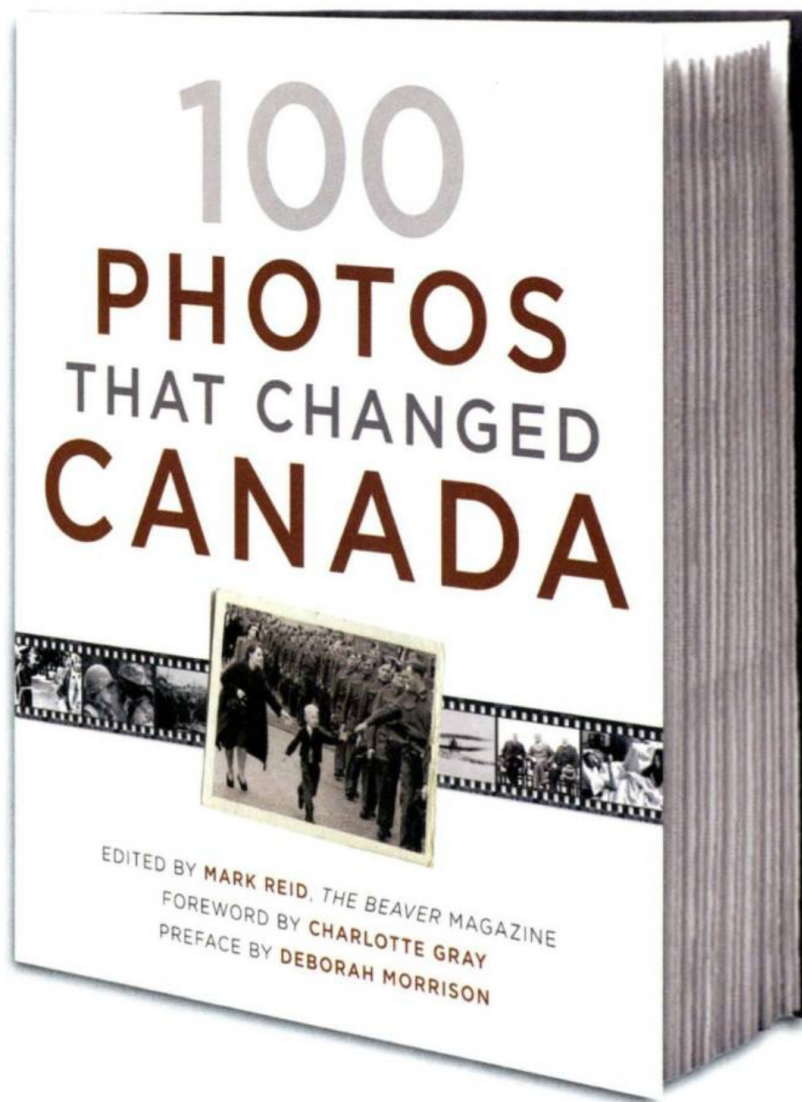
Stephen Bown's latest book is *Merchant Kings: When Companies Ruled the World, 1600–1900* published by Douglas and McIntyre in 2009. Visit his website at www.stephenbown.net.

Et Cetera

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Irving Abella
Tom Axworthy
Christie Blatchford
Michael Bliss
Jim Burant
Margaret Conrad
Tim Cook
Denys Delâge
Peter Desbarats
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The Beaver
CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

Cracking a hard case

New online data aided an otherwise impossible family search, says Paul Jones.



Anne's research goal seemed beyond reach.

She wanted to know what had become of her aunt, Mary McLaughlin, after she was given up for adoption in the 1920s. However, even under Ontario's newly liberal access to adoption records, a niece has no legal standing to request such information. So a breakthrough had to depend on nuts-and-bolts research — and maybe serendipity.

The only problem was where to begin.

Anne knew that Mary was born circa 1912 and that in or after 1923 she had been adopted by a family named "Adams" from Guelph, Ontario. It was believed that the Adams family (sorry, no other way of saying it!) later moved to England.

Now, Adams is a common name. A city directory for Guelph from the period would provide many candidate families — with no easy means of identifying the

right one. A longitudinal survey of Guelph directories over a number of years might find several Adams households dropping from sight. Again, how would you know which particular one had left for England? As for seeking a Mary Adams or a Mary McLaughlin in England, the mind boggles. You could spend years cranking through microfilms and be no closer to a solution.

There the matter rested during the late summer and early fall of 2008. A couple of months later, my sister suggested that I provide Anne with a written report summarizing the admittedly unappealing research options. Okay, I said, but Anne would have to remind me of the by-then-forgotten details of the case.

What a difference a day — or in this case, a few months — makes! After reading Anne's summary, I realized that the case could now be cracked. On October 20, 2008, the online genealogical data

This 1929 passenger list from the *Andania* helped solve a family mystery.

company Ancestry.co.uk had launched — in partnership with The National Archives of the United Kingdom — a

SEARCHING FOR MARY: A Timeline

Date	ca. 1912	Nov. 1915	May 1921	ca. 1923	Sept. 1929
Event	Birth	Enlistment	Emigration	Adoption	Immigration
Source	Family oral history	Attestation papers	Outbound passenger lists	Family oral history	Inbound passenger lists
Child*	Mary McLaughlin	None	None in the party	Mary Adams, ca. 11	Mary Adams, 17
Husband*		Henry Herbert Adams, 36	Henry H. Adams, 41		Henry Adams, 49
Occupation		Coach builder	Cabinetmaker		Cabinetmaker
Wife*		Frances Harriet	Fces. H.		Frances

* The inbound passenger lists do not specify relationships between passengers in the party.

The moral of this story is that family history research can change in a day. Given the rate at which vast classes of records are appearing online, fully digitized and indexed, you should never assume that your problem will remain intractable for all time.

searchable index of passengers arriving in the U.K. by ship between 1878 and 1960, along with digitized images of the ship manifests. A quick online search yielded the 1929 arrival of Mary Adams, age seventeen, accompanying Henry Adams, cabinetmaker, forty-nine, and Frances Adams, housewife, with an intended address in Liverpool. (See the image of the passenger list.)

Exciting, thrilling even, but not proof of Mary McLaughlin's fate. Still, we now had a working hypothesis with real names of real people. All along, Anne had believed that the Adams family had earlier emigrated from England: given prevailing migration patterns at the time, why else would they be going to England in 1929? With first names in hand, we could test this theory in the indexed records of passengers outbound from the U.K., also recently made available online. Sure enough, there was the 1921 departure for Canada of Henry H.

Adams, cabinetmaker, forty-one, traveling from a Liverpool address with his wife "Fces. H. Adams" — and, most tellingly, with no young Mary.

So the hypothesis strengthened, but we still couldn't be sure; maybe Mary Adams had come to Canada at another time. How could we prove that Henry and Frances had no biological daughter born around 1912? Henry would have been in his thirties during the Great War and would surely have been called up. A few more clicks on another new online resource, and up came the attestation papers of Henry Herbert Adams of Liverpool, husband of Frances Harriet Adams. And there was the signature of H.H. Adams, attesting that as of the twenty-eighth day of November 1915 he had no children!

Okay, one can explain the timeline with convoluted scenarios in which Mary Adams and Mary McLaughlin were different people. But that isn't neces-

sary. In a triumph of common sense and compassion over red tape, the adoption authorities kindly confirmed to Anne that Mary Adams, daughter of Henry H. and Frances Adams, was indeed the former Mary McLaughlin.

The moral of this story is that family history research can change in a day. Given the rate at which vast classes of records are appearing online, fully digitized and indexed, you should never assume that your problem will remain intractable for all time. The three documentary sources used in developing and corroborating this case history had first appeared online as recently as a few days and as long as only fifteen months prior to the breakthrough.

As to Mary's fate in England, that will have to wait another day. 🐼

Paul Jones is a retired publisher, a writer, a family historian, and a director of Canada's History Society. He consults on business and genealogy issues.

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BETTER LED THAN RED

**Warming Up to the Cold War:
Canada and the United States' Coalition of
the Willing, from Hiroshima to Korea**

by Robert Teigrob

University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2009
296 pp., illus., \$24.95 paperback

**Essence of Indecision:
Diefenbaker's Nuclear Policy, 1957-1963**

by Patricia I. McMahon

McGill-Queen's University Press,
Montreal, 2009
264 pp., \$85 hardcover

The years following the Second World War marked a watershed in Canada's maturing political culture. Two recent books examine the complexity of this period, notably the interplay between government decisions and public values. Both books look at relations with the United States — military relations, chiefly — and how these affected Canada's sovereignty, industrial development, and sense of its national interests.

In *Warming Up to the Cold War*, Robert Teigrob focuses on the immediate postwar period from 1945 to 1950. He examines five major issues facing Canada and the world: nuclear arms proliferation and civilian nuclear programs; Soviet espionage following the Gouzenko affair; anti-colonial movements; multilateralism, notably through NATO; and Canada's military role in Korea.

Teigrob's thorough academic style does not hide his unhappiness with decisions and attitudes from that period. Sur-

veying Canada's posture in those early Cold War years, he asks, with evident sadness: "What led Canadians to sign on with such apparent enthusiasm to a battle, and wider global confrontation, which was built so firmly upon the discourses of American nationalism?"

The central point in this densely written study is that American media culture, carried by newspapers and radio, was the primary force shaping Canadian public opinion on international issues. Teigrob's arguments are at times flat and mechanistic, portraying Canadians as having few opinions of their own, waiting to be guided by American mass media.

The book does draw attention to other influential voices, including traditional British-oriented elites and some social liberals. Teigrob concedes that Canadians themselves chose a firm anti-communist stance and did not support a vague alignment of international neutrality with a renewed Commonwealth in order to counter American power. He concludes that "Canada became a satellite, in part, through an act of volition."

There is a tension in Teigrob's study that is never resolved to my satisfaction. While he makes a valuable addition to our knowledge of media commentary in the U.S. and Canada, he remains tied to the thesis that "the Canadian public had been manoeuvred toward the pro-U.S. anti-communist consensus." He underestimates the independent desire of Canadians to reject appeasement of communism, as well as their capacity to recognize that Britain's place in world leadership had been replaced by America. Support here for the Western alliance was based on many factors, including the political judgment of hundreds of thousands of Canadian veterans who had just served in the war against fascism.

If the Cold War years saw Canada aligning itself closely with America's international leadership, it was also a period of dynamic domestic changes, including major cultural initiatives, transcontinental industrial projects, and leading scientific research. This spirit of renewal culminated politically with the 1957

election of John Diefenbaker — a prairie populist who captured a mood of growing optimism — as prime minister.

Patricia McMahon's book begins with Diefenbaker's first victory. Her approach differs from Teigrob's in both style and methodology. Through a close reading of Cabinet records, correspondence, and personal memoirs, she has prepared a detailed institutional study on "the essence of indecision" — why the Diefenbaker government vacillated over the course of six years on whether to accept nuclear warheads for the Bomarc air defence system.

First elected with a minority government, Diefenbaker won a landslide election in 1958, with the largest parliamentary majority ever. Anger with Liberal arrogance was an important factor in this campaign, but Diefenbaker's popularity owed much to his brilliant oratory, which gave voice to Canada's postwar nationalism.

However, his government soon became mired in endless dithering, incapable of choosing firm directions. Nowhere was this more apparent than in relations with the United States, particularly on defence policy.

The Diefenbaker meltdown is part of our political mythology. McMahon's work is not a revisionist history, although she does express sympathy for the man, attributing his indecision to exaggerated political sensitivities. She notes, for example, the attention and respect he gave to anti-nuclear campaigners despite their limited numbers. And she underlines his fear that the Opposition, led by Lester Pearson, would "make use of the government's acceptance of nuclear weapons for the Liberal Party's political gain."

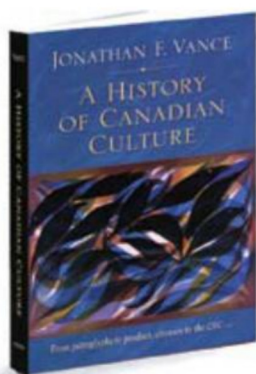
Despite her kindly efforts, McMahon's portrait of Diefenbaker remains unflattering. His overwhelming parliamentary power was shattered by paranoia, confusion, and disorganization. He never successfully managed the central tension of Canada's Cold War political culture: how to stay closely allied to a powerful America while also expressing real independence in domestic policies and modest

Reviews

independence as a junior international partner.

Patricia McMahon and Robert Teigrob have added colourful details to Canada's 1950s Cold War narrative. They explore options and implications, helping us identify the contending players and cultural forces that blossomed in the 1960s and '70s. In these later years, while the Cold War still dominated international relations, modern Canada was transformed by dramatic domestic decisions affecting our social, military, linguistic, regional, and multicultural character. The political bases for those changes took form in the underappreciated 1950s.

Reviewed by **Victor Rabinovitch**, president and CEO of the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation and a fellow of Queen's University School of Policy Studies.



BROAD CANVAS

A History of Canadian Culture

by Jonathan F. Vance
Oxford University Press,
Don Mills, Ontario, 2009
500 pp., illus., \$39.95 hardcover

For more than twenty years, Presbyterian minister Charles Gordon was a fixture on best-seller lists with books such as *The Sky Pilot* (1899) and *The Man from Glenarry* (1901). Worth over \$1 million in the mid-1910s (\$18 million in today's values), he was one of the first Canadian authors to win international

success. Only Lucy Maud Montgomery and Stephen Leacock were in his league.

Gordon wrote as Ralph Connor, an accidental alias. He had originally chosen the pen name Cannor, a contraction of "British Canadian North-West Mission," an organization for which he was secretary. But a well-meaning telegraph operator assumed this was a mistake, changed the spelling, and then added the first name Ralph for good measure.

In 1902, "Ralph Connor" received a letter from the Massey-Harris Company, manufacturer of the ploughs and tractors that were busy transforming the vast open prairies into farmland. The company wanted to bestow some corporate patronage on Connor in return for a little product placement.

"We desire," read the letter, "to obtain a love story or storiette with Canada for the background and Massey-Harris Farming Implements interwoven in the theme. ... The idea is, first to set the Canadian farms on fire with Ralph Connor's story, and, secondly, out of the fire to get considerable salvage in the shape of profitable advertising."

Sky Pilot on a Massey-Harris Plough was never written. But there is much to love about this tale — the fact that one of the first successful Canadian novelists was a church minister, the accident by which he acquired his pen name, and the Babbitt assumption of a tractor-maker that art could be harnessed for propaganda. It is all so Canadian. But is it Canadian culture?

The interplay between artistic creation and identity formation is woven through Jonathan Vance's *A History of Canadian Culture*. Vance, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Conflict and Culture in the Department of History at the University of Western Ontario, begins his ambitious survey with the prehistoric relics of First Nations and sur-

living accounts of aboriginal music, dance, and stories.

He explores the chasm in early colonial societies between the educated (often military) elites, with their masked balls and imported harpsichords, and the labouring (often illiterate) classes who enjoyed singsongs and circuses.

As the population increased, governments began to see culture as a useful tool in the inculcation of civic virtues. In 1853, the Reverend Egerton Ryerson produced an astonishingly worthy list of books available for Upper Canadian libraries. One of the livelier titles was *Shells and Their Inmates*.

From there, Vance takes the story through the gradual evolution of an indigenous architecture and literary culture, the relentless conservatism of Canadian aesthetic taste, and the spasmodic shakeups, such as those provided by the Group of Seven painters and modernist poets in the 1920s.

The last half of the book is dominated by two issues. The first is the explosion of patriotism across Canada in the 1960s and the cultural activities spawned by Confederation's centenary. The second is the growing role of government as patron and regulator of the arts, as culture came to be seen as a vehicle for nation-building.

The origin of this book was a survey course that Vance taught, and he relied on several research assistants (duly acknowledged) to amass additional material. These factors are both strengths and weaknesses. The book is a vigorous overview of a complicated subject, but too many pages are filled with catalogues of theatre companies, government buildings, artists, libraries, or government agencies.

Inevitably, in such a broad-brush effort, there are windy generalizations ("history demanded that a record be kept of these formative

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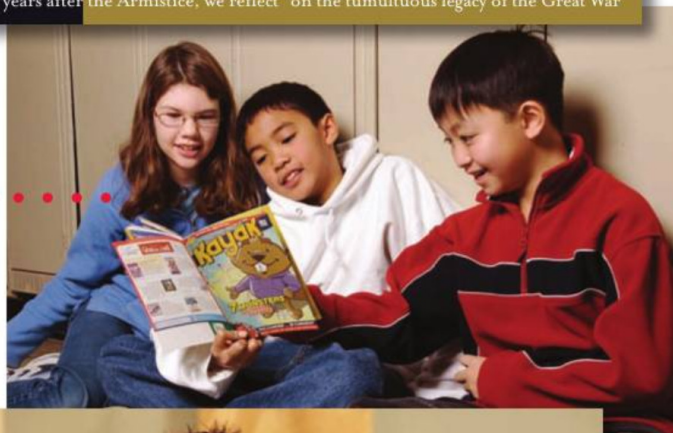
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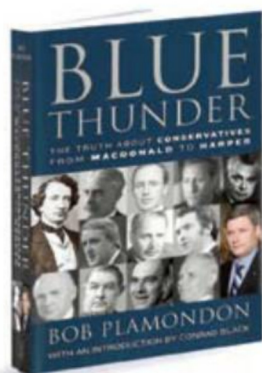
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CANADA'S
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years in Canada's history") and surprising gaps. Quebec gets short shrift, especially in the later chapters. And although the author recognizes that "the fundamental relationship is not between culture and nationalism, but culture and identity," he barely acknowledges that there are at least two, if not several, distinct Canadian identities.

But such criticisms do not detract from the value of a book that tries to make sense of a sprawling subject and includes such wonderful stories as Massey-Harris's attempt to "buy" Ralph Connor. There is no evidence that the Presbyterian minister ever replied to the offer.

Reviewed by **Charlotte Gray**, the chair of Canada's National History Society and an adjunct research professor at Carleton University.



MORE OR LESS RIGHT

Blue Thunder:
The Truth about Conservatives
from Macdonald to Harper
by Bob Plamondon
Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2009
504 pp., \$34.95 hardcover

Bob Plamondon's *Blue Thunder* is an easy, enjoyable read for anyone interested in Canadian politics, particularly for those who identify with the Conservative Party. However, it should be noted that this book is about Con-

servative Party leaders, rather than the party per se — unlike the last authoritative work on the party, by John Williams, which was published more than half a century ago.

The book is divided into ten sections, beginning with Sir John A. Macdonald and ending with Stephen Harper and a look to the future. Within each section there are

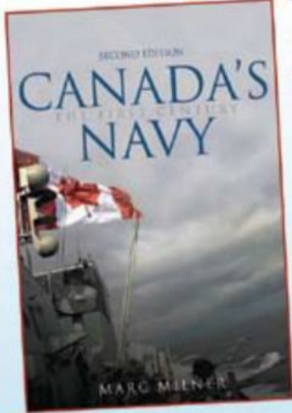
anywhere from two to seven chapters, depending on the era. In addition, there is an excellent statistical appendix, an appendix assessing the leaders against a variety of criteria, and a comprehensive bibliography.

The book is somewhat puzzling in that its first half is full of errors — some serious, some minor; some of commission, some of omission

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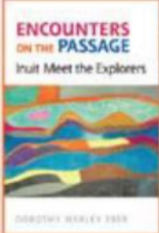
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Reviews

— but it is error-free in its second half.

The minor errors are irritating. They include spelling Nickle two different ways in three lines, calling Sir John Rose Canada's first minister of finance when he was the second, making statements in the text that are contradicted in the author's own

appendix (Mackenzie King won a majority in 1921), as well as dating errors.

The errors of omission are annoying. For example, Plamondon provides a full description of the party's first convention in Winnipeg in 1927, but he ignores the fact that this was the first convention of any Canadian

party where women attended as voting delegates and the fact that it was the first to be broadcast by radio.

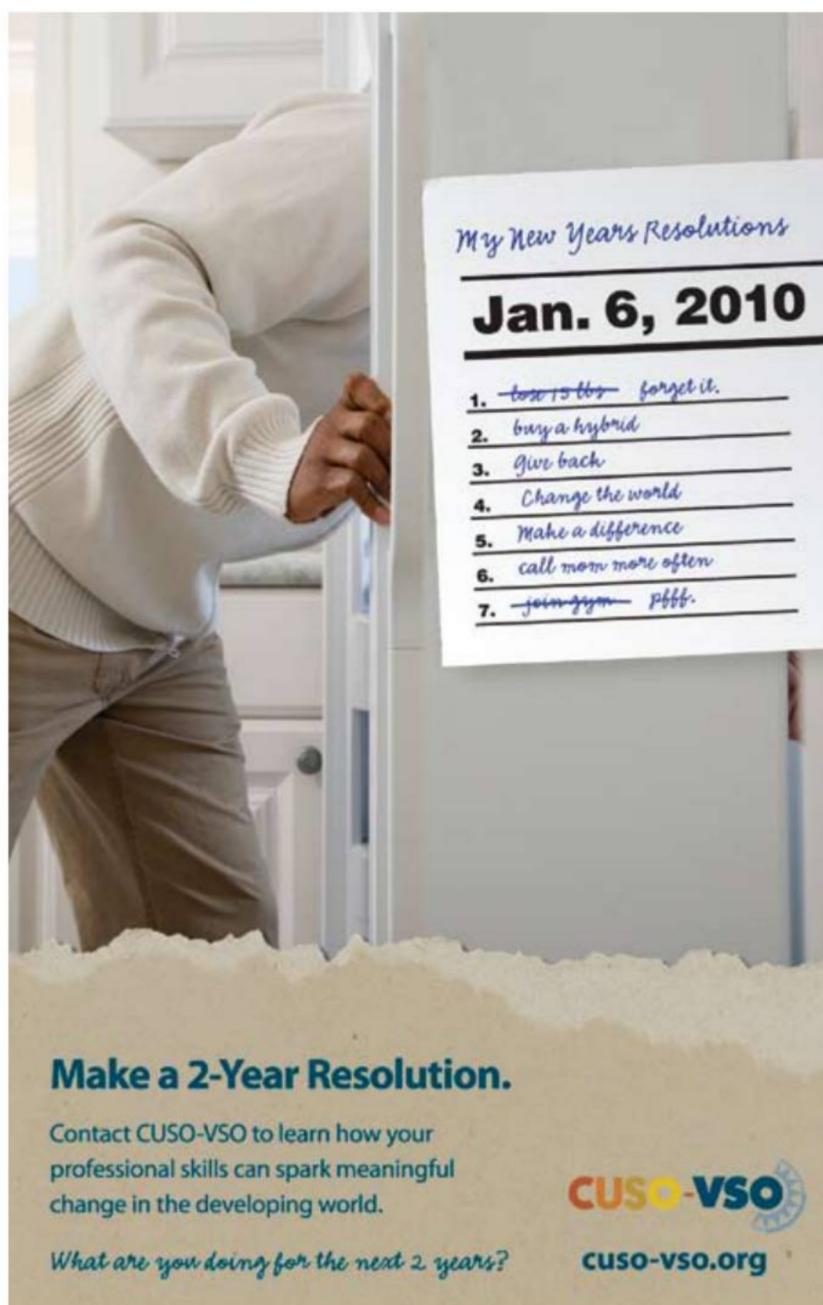
The major errors relate to policy rather than to politics. The National Policy — arguably the most significant economic policy of any Canadian government of any stripe at any time — is not in the index, although there is room for the National Products Marketing Act. Nor is there any reference to the decisions at the Quebec City Conference that made currency, banking, and insurance federal functions, decisions that have been so important in ensuring that Canada did not experience the sort of "credit crisis" the United States has been suffering.

Something happens when the author reaches Section V, which deals with John "Dief the Chief" Diefenbaker. His analysis of both the Avro Arrow and the Coyne crisis are excellent. For those who have said Diefenbaker was not a true Conservative, Plamondon points out Diefenbaker's libertarian streak. Chapter 19 is the best chapter in the book and his summation of Diefenbaker is excellent.

In the next-to-last chapter, he sets out seven criteria on which to judge a prime minister and then proceeds to perform a critique of current Prime Minister Stephen Harper. This is interesting but premature. He concludes with a chapter on the evolution of Conservative leaders, rather than that of the party as a whole.

Plamondon provides a useful contribution to Canadian political history, particularly in regard to the much neglected and maligned R. B. Bennett. *Blue Thunder* is a book long on politics and short on policy. In spite of the many errors in its first half, it is a good political read.

Reviewed by **Joe Martin**, the Albany Club historian and the author of the recently released *Relentless Change: A Casebook for the Study of Canadian Business History*.



My New Years Resolutions
Jan. 6, 2010

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More Books



Burlesque West: Showgirls, Sex, and Sin in Postwar Vancouver

by Becki L. Ross
University of Toronto Press,
Toronto, 2009
368 pp., illus., \$29.95 paperback

The sexy showgirl biz was as much a factor in reviving Vancouver's postwar economy as railways, grain elevators, and sawmills. Who knew?

The economic impact of striptease is just one of the subjects examined in *Burlesque West*, an intensely researched peek at the industry in Vancouver between 1945 and 1980, when the city had a thriving strip scene.

Becki L. Ross interviewed dancers, nightclub owners, and others involved in the business to put together an exhaustive, thoroughly academic, yet readable study. She traces the heyday of striptease, when it required more talent and less exposure than today.

The book bemoans the industry's decline into hardcore porn. "Like everything else, including Rocky Road ice cream, or chopped chicken livers, too much of a good thing kills the taste," said a newspaper columnist quoted by Ross.

The author, a sociology professor at the University of British Columbia, received a lot of flak from the public for obtaining a \$50,000 federal government grant to research Vancouver's historic showgirl scene. But she forged ahead anyway, rigorously documenting a field that rarely receives serious study. It was probably money well spent — **N.O.**



The Man Who Said No: Reading Jacob Bailey, Loyalist

by Kent Thompson
Gaspereau Press,
Kentville, Nova Scotia, 2008
288 pp., illus., \$29.95 paperback

A beautifully produced book from specialty publisher Gaspereau Press, Kent Thompson's *The Man Who Said No*



Coming in *Canada's History* April • May



Rewriting History

A scholar's research promised to turn the story of North America's discovery upside down. Instead, a new mystery has emerged.
BY DOUGLAS HUNTER

Reconstructing David Thompson

First he was revered as a perfect saint; later he was seen as a flawed bungler. Whatever the truth, interest in Canada's greatest map-maker is as intense today as it ever was.
BY D'ARCY JENISH

Indian Kings

Four Iroquois chiefs who arrived in London in 1710 were feted like royalty. That was a change. Earlier First Nations visitors to Europe were more likely to be treated like circus acts — or worse.
BY NELLE OOSTEROM

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follows the life of Jacob Bailey, an Anglican clergyman and Loyalist who in 1782 fled the American Revolution to Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia.

Moving against the current of the Enlightenment, Bailey endeavoured to find morality in a period of intense change and challenges.

Thompson includes many examples of Bailey's writing. Excerpts from the journal of his sojourn to England and from his correspondence while at Harvard University, including letters with future United States President John Adams, give readers a true sense of the man.

Quirky and unique in his approach, Thompson finds a likeable way of bringing the story to life. Bailey's insights combine with Thompson's tongue-in-cheek narrative to provide a pleasing glimpse into the time.

— Joel Ralph



Unlikely Paradise:

The Life of Frances Gage

by Alan D. Butcher
Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2009
264 pp., illus., \$35 hardcover

Sculptor Frances Gage did not have the most pleasant of childhoods. Born in Windsor, Ontario, in 1924, she was nonetheless able to find comfort through artistic pursuits and though a love for animals that would later find expression in her creative work.

Practising an art can be a lonely, solitary experience intertwined with both self-doubt and elation. Money worries are common. Gage was to experience all of these things, yet she persevered.

She was classically trained at the Ontario College of Art, the Art Students League in New York, and the École des beaux-arts in Paris. Her artistic prowess is evident in the work shown in the biography *Unlikely Paradise*.

Author Alan D. Butcher includes both humour and life lessons. Some of Gage's leanest years, after completing her schooling in 1957, were among the happiest of her life. Dur-

ing this period she rented a cold, rat-ridden studio shack in Toronto that had once been used by artist Tom Thomson and that she described as a "magic place."

While Gage and others were consulted throughout the writing of this biography, it is debatable as to whether the text always conveys their true feelings. Butcher concedes that he tried to express what people "might have said" or felt, and on the whole his effort is worthy of commendation.

Let's hope that more books are written about Canadian artists who have hitherto failed to receive the acknowledgement they deserve. — B.T.



Jacques Plante: The Man Who Changed the Face of Hockey

by Todd Denault
McClelland & Stewart,
Toronto, 2009
336 pp., illus., \$32.99 hardcover

In the world of sports, when players put their bodies on the line to help their squad win, they call it "taking one for the team."

Well, Jacques Plante — the celebrated netminder who played in the National Hockey League from the 1950s to the 1970s — certainly took more than his share, and quite often square in the face.

Plante, of course, is the man who revolutionized the position of goalie by becoming the first NHL player to regularly wear a mask. He was also the first backstop to challenge the opposition by leaving his crease to cut off shooting angles, and he worked closely and vocally with his defencemen, acting as an on-ice general commanding the troops.

Plante took a lot of heat for his decision to cover up, and writer Todd Denault paints a compelling portrait of the man behind the mask. As the Montreal Canadiens, the team with which he won six of his record seven Vezina trophies, celebrates 100 years of play, Jacques Plante is a welcome addition to the storied team's literary canon. — M.R.



Canuck Rock: A History of Canadian Popular Music

by Ryan Edwardson
University of Toronto Press,
Toronto, 2009
344 pp., illus., \$27.95 paperback

Like most patriotic Canucks, I have plenty of Canadian content scattered throughout my CD collection. The Tragically Hip, Blue Rodeo, and Sloan are just a few of the bands I grew up with. However, my collection also boasts plenty of American rock and metal albums; yes, I too went through my big-hair-band phase in the 1980s.

In *Canuck Rock: A History of Canadian Popular Music*, author Ryan Edwardson gives us an academic's view of Canadian popular music history from the 1950s to contemporary times. It's an informative tome, offering plenty of analysis and details regarding the music that makes up the sonic fabric of Canada.

The early sections focus on the

American influence on the Canadian rock scene, while later chapters weigh the pros and cons of heading south in search of commercial success.

Canuck Rock is not for casual fans of Canadian music who are looking for a breezy read. But if you are yearning for a heavy dose of CanCon, then this book is for you. — **M.R.**

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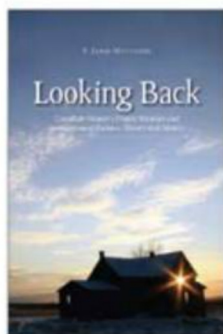
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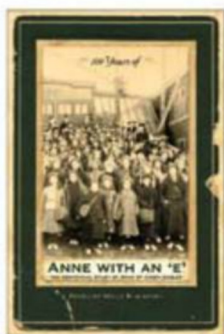
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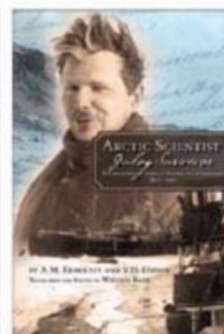
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Getaway

A candlelight procession kicks off the Festival du Voyageur.



DAN HARPER PHOTOGRAPHY

Red River Rendezvous

Julijana Capone discovers Manitoba's fur-trade legacy at the Festival du Voyageur.

A bartender reaches for a glass made of ice and pours out a shot of sweet-tasting caribou. "All at once," he says. I chug back the mixture of fortified wine, brandy, and maple syrup, and slam my ice glass on the bar. "Aaaahhh, like a true voyageur!" he proclaims.

Caribou — so named for the fiery drink enjoyed by voyageurs on caribou hunts in Quebec — is just one of many attractions at Winnipeg's annual Festival du Voyageur. Walking through Fort Gibraltar — a reconstruction of an original North West Company post — I pass a large bearded man in voyageur garb, wearing a toque, a red sash, and a beaver

pelt over one shoulder. Alluring smells of maple syrup, fresh bannock, and pemmican drying over burning firewood fill the air, along with the roaring fiddles of a

Celtic band. Inside a tent, a jigger cracks his boots against wood chips and bits of smashed ice glasses from rounds of caribou as he claps along to the music.

Members of La Compagnie de la Vérendrye perform historical re-enactments during the festival.



For two weeks in mid-February, Winnipeg's French quarter, St. Boniface, shares its joie de vivre through Festival du Voyageur, which revisits the fur-trade era as it was lived along the shores of the Red River in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Voyageurs made long voyages—from Montreal through to the Pacific Northwest and Athabaska regions—under severe conditions. During the long, cold winter months they took a break from their gruelling work on the fur brigades.

"The festival is the metaphor for when they would rendezvous, break free from the winter cycle, and have fun," says Emili Bellefleur, director of marketing and communications for the Festival du Voyageur.

Fur traders arrived at Red River long before it became a settlement. Fort Gibraltar, originally built by the North West Company in 1809 at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, was in constant conflict with its competitor, the Hudson's Bay Company trading post just downriver at Fort Douglas.

The battle of the two great companies brought out ugliness in the men, according to Marion Bryce (1839–1920), a Manitoba College lecturer who was the Manitoba Historical Society's first female member: "In the petty kind of warfare that was waged, men of honour were led to do things in the interests of their companies that in private life they would have held in utter contempt."

Hudson's Bay men destroyed Fort Gibraltar in 1816. But the British government deemed the act illegal and the fort was rebuilt the following year. By 1821, with losses mounting on both sides, the warring companies made peace and struck a deal. They united to form a mightier Hudson's Bay Company.

The Festival du Voyageur harkens back to early voyageur days through its displays of arts and culture. An assortment of aboriginal crafts, including fur and leather handiworks, are sold. Craftsmen along merchant row show off their talents by weaving the traditional Métis sash. The colours within

Jules Desjarlais is one of the historical interpreters at the festival.



DAN HARPER PHOTOGRAPHY

the design are said to represent the diverse backgrounds and languages of the Métis people.

The International Snow Sculpting Symposium is one of the festival's biggest draws, according to Bellefleur. Teams representing countries from all over the world come to carve masterpieces out of giant snow blocks.

As I look beyond the lights reflecting off the glimmering snow sculptures, I imagine the voyageurs of long ago. Their never-waning spirit, their joie de vivre,

lives on in the Festival du Voyageur.

In 2010, Festival du Voyageur will be part of Saison Voyageur, a new celebration that began on the winter solstice and includes activities on Winnipeg's river skating trails. The events are all part of Manitoba Homecoming 2010, a year-long program aimed at encouraging former Manitobans to return to their home province for a visit.

Julijana Capone is a freelance writer. She studies rhetoric and communications at the University of Winnipeg.

IF YOU GO...

Fort Gibraltar, where Festival du Voyageur takes place, is located minutes from downtown Winnipeg. The site is in Whittier Park on the banks of the Red River in St. Boniface. The 2010 event runs February 12–21. Passes are \$20 per adult, and \$5 per youth. Preschoolers get in free. Adult day passes are \$12.

Festival du Voyageur

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Deborah Morrison

Quizzing new Canadians

Revised citizenship test more a bridge than a barrier.

Immigrants seeking to become Canadian citizens will be subjected to a new citizenship test beginning in March, following widely publicized changes made to the study guide last fall. Among other things, the guide contains more history. The question now is whether the changes will affect who becomes a test-taker.

Looking at the types of questions typically asked on the old test, it is hard to imagine that additional history content will make the test radically more difficult. The format will remain the same. There will be twenty multiple-choice questions. Samples from the old test include: How many years did the Hudson's Bay Company control Rupert's Land? Why did European explorers first come to Atlantic Canada? Who is Canada's head of state? How do you mark your ballot in a voting booth? The test can't include anything that's not in the guide, and prospective Canadians have to get twelve of the answers correct to pass.

Some are concerned that the new guide, written at a higher reading level and with more details to remember, is going to make it harder for recent immigrants. While many of us may have a fixed impression of what language and academic capabilities newcomers have, just exactly who is preparing for this test may surprise you.

According to Statistics Canada, of the 133,855 permanent residents (people eligible to become citizens) in Canada in 2008, 61,000 of them (forty-six percent) were skilled labourers, professionals, investors, or entrepreneurs. A further 52,000 were spouses or family members, over eighty percent of whom were also skilled workers. In total, more than seventy percent could speak either English or French, and just under half of them had a post-secondary degree.

You need to be a permanent resident

in Canada for at least three years before you can apply for citizenship. There are hundreds of online resources and practice tests, and virtually every community offers free or low-cost citizenship classes in English, French, and a variety of other languages. Indeed, given all these opportunities, the likelihood of passing the test is high; Citizenship and Immigration

countries with markedly different political systems from ours are typically the fastest to apply.

However, immigrants from countries with a long history of Canadian migration (for example, the U.K., the U.S., Italy and Portugal) take, on average, more than ten years to take out full citizenship. Some never do. They likely experience fewer



Citizenship ceremony at Kingston, Ontario, July 2009.

even offers a second-chance oral interview for those who fail the written test.

The speed at which a permanent resident opts to apply for citizenship often depends on how strongly connected to Canada they feel. It also depends on whether they believe the benefits of citizenship — voting rights, public service jobs — outweigh the costs, such as giving up status in another country and being criticized by other nationals.

Canada has one of the highest naturalization rates in the world, partly because of the relative ease of the citizenship application process, as well as the fact that more countries are allowing dual citizenship. Refugees, people who immigrated as children, and people from

of the economic and social barriers that would otherwise spur them to citizenship.

Over the past few months I've spoken with some of these long-term residents about the guide. Their first reaction has been to take greater stock of their investment in their adopted country. Many acknowledge that the time for them to become full citizens is overdue; some wryly hope that their Canadian-born kids can coach them on the history.

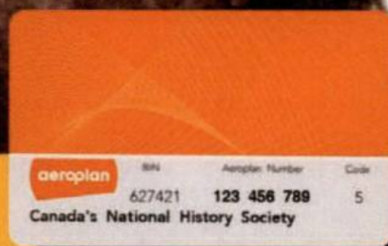
Perhaps the new guide will have the effect of persuading more long-term residents to finally take the oath of citizenship.



Deborah Morrison was one of the advisers contacted to review and comment on the new citizenship guide as it was developed.



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CANADIAN AVIATION
1930: J. Errol Boyd
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History Matters



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publisher of *The Beaver* Canada's History Magazine and
Kayak Canada's History Magazine for Kids

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The *Beaver* was founded in 1920 by the Hudson's Bay
Company, whose commitment to the History Society and
its programs continues today through the
Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation.



Happy 90th birthday, Beaver magazine

**The story of how our publication evolved from a company
newsletter to a national history magazine. by Deborah Morrison**

Our magazine turns ninety
this year. Like any ninety-
year-old, it has seen a lot
of changes. Here's a look
back on the evolution of what has
become Canada's most popular his-
tory magazine:

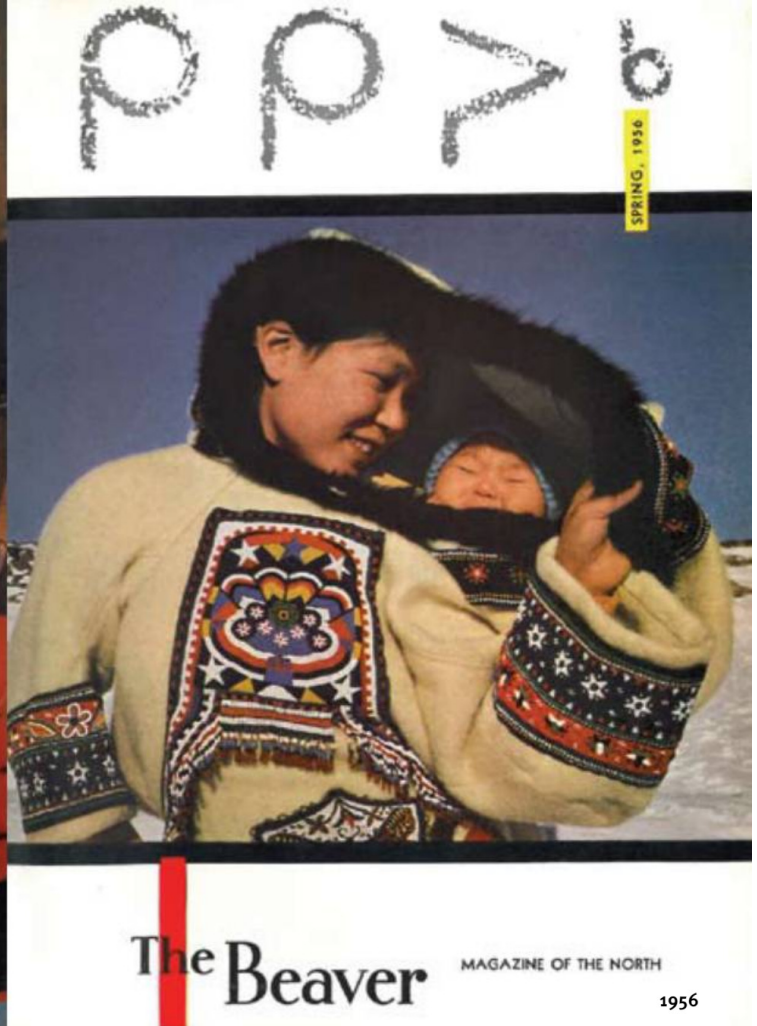
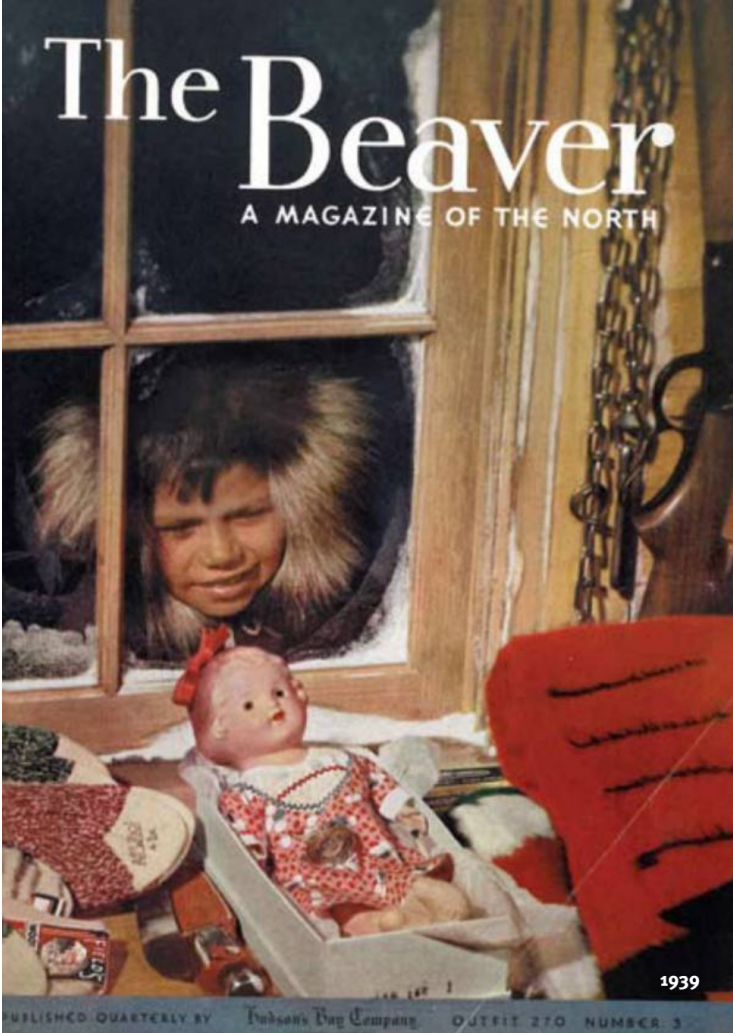
The Hudson's Bay Company
launched *The Beaver: A Journal of
Progress* in 1920 as a 250th anniversary
project. The journal's mission was to
promote pride, loyalty, and camarade-
rie, especially among city-based

retail employees. Although its name
reflected the company's northern
fur-trading ventures, the first issues
were more likely to carry flattering
profiles of HBC store managers than
to describe life on the trapline.

Our first editor was Clifton Thom-
as, an American advertising agent.
According to historian Peter Geller,
"Thomas envisioned the new com-
pany journal ... as an expression of
the burgeoning North American cul-
ture of consumption." Five thousand

The Beaver

A MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH



copies of the first issue were printed and distributed at a total cost of \$570.

For the first three years, employees and their families were just about the only readers. Then it went through its first redesign, which was precipitated by a decision to sell the magazine to "those not in the service." The subscription rate was one dollar a year, a rate still in effect well into the 1930s.

Company employee Robert Watson took over as editor. Watson was a novelist and short-story writer who steered the publication away from its emphasis on corporate publicity in favour of a more literary approach. He asked employees in the North to write about their experiences working in company stores and trading posts. The public, not just employees, began reading about the company's role in opening up the North.

But the journal struggled financially. In 1924, the magazine ceased monthly publication and became a quarterly. It almost ceased publication altogether in 1932, during the depths of the Great Depression. That year, the company's Canadian committee recommended its suspension, citing the \$9,000-a-year cost to run it.

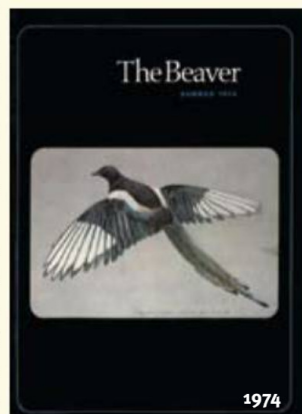
However, newly installed HBC governor Patrick Ashley Cooper still believed in the potential of the magazine and gave it another chance. He hired professional journalist

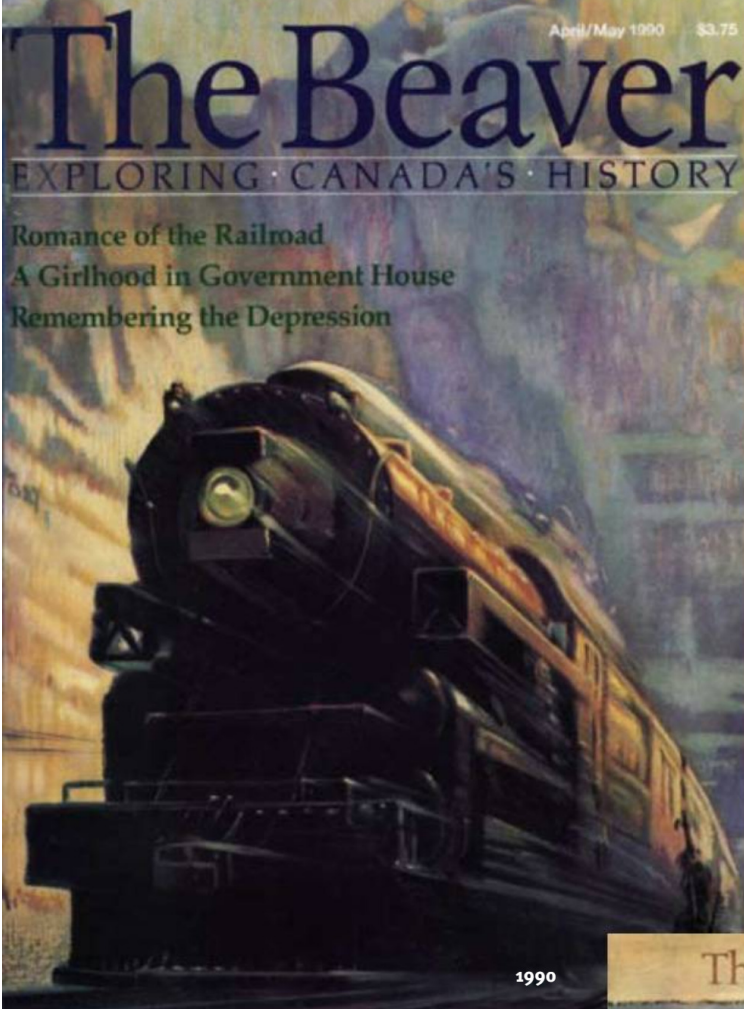
Douglas MacKay as editor.

In September 1933, MacKay replaced the original digest format with a standard magazine design. He also changed the masthead to say "*A Magazine of the North*." Inspired by photo-driven periodicals like *Life* magazine, MacKay made *The Beaver* more visually appealing. Fur Trade Department employees received training on how to take professional-looking photographs. They travelled on company planes and vessels, capturing compelling images of life in northern Canada.

By 1938, the magazine's annual costs had grown to \$20,000 (roughly \$292,000 in today's terms) — but it was now seen by the company as a valuable public relations investment.

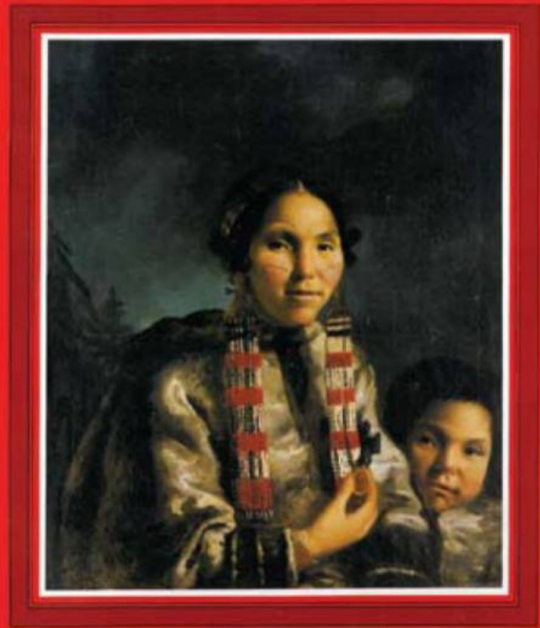
For the next fifty years, the magazine focused on northern life and history. Under three of its longest-serving editors — Clifford Wilson (1939–1957), Malvina Bolus (1958–1972), and Helen Burgess (1972–1985) — the magazine's cover and visual presentation remained basically the same. But the editorial content shifted. While HBC staff continued to write about their Arctic experiences, First Nations people also started writing about their lives. Distinguished anthropologist Margaret Mead graced the magazine's pages, as did a host of professional historians and writers.





The Beaver

WINTER 1983
\$2.50



Mikak: An Inuit Woman in London, 1769
The DEW Line • Cape Dorset Artists

1983

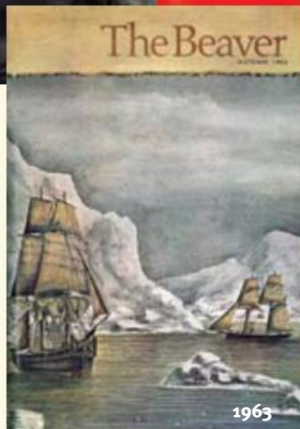
The Beaver earned a reputation for bold opinions and insightful research. It was providing an increasingly broad perspective about the history of Canada and the HBC.

By 1987, the company had formally ended its involvement in the fur trade and had shifted its business focus to retail expansion. So, too, the magazine went through another evolution. Editor Christopher Dafoe (1985–1998) oversaw the change from quarterly to bimonthly. He also broadened the magazine's focus. Its masthead announced that it was "*Exploring Canada's History*."

More changes followed. In 1994, the HBC donated its archive and artifact collections to the province of Manitoba. It used the tax savings it received to establish the HBC History Foundation, which, among other things, established Canada's National History Society. The society took over publication of the magazine and furthered the mission to promote greater popular interest in history.

Annalee Greenberg joined the magazine as editor in 1998, and subsequent editorial staff members have worked hard to keep pace with a changing view of publishing, as well as a changing view of Canada and its place in the world.

Almost a century of new history has been made since the magazine was first launched. Who gets to tell the story, and the tools they have to tell it with, have all changed as well.



It's not easy making history relevant in a future-focused world, and it's still far from profitable. But like HBC governor Cooper back in the 1930s, the History Society believes in the power and potential of this magazine.

Mark Reid, our editor as we enter the twenty-first century, is blazing a bold new trail that will bring our stories to new media and new markets. With this expansion, the time has come again to redefine our publication and claim our place as *Canada's History* magazine.

This change, like all the others before it, comes with a renewed commitment to providing quality, carefully researched content that reflects the breadth and range of uniquely Canadian stories. And it also comes with a careful consideration and respect for the legacy that has brought us to this place — because, after all, some things simply endure.

Deborah Morrison is the publisher and CEO of *Canada's History*.



To order back issues of our magazine, go to our website at HistorySociety.ca.

Album

Tom Kennedy Jr. is the son of Tom Kennedy and resides in St. Catharines, Ontario.



Working on the railway

Tom Kennedy was a railway man. In 1897, at the age of eighteen, he joined the Michigan Central, which operated lines in southern Ontario's Niagara region. His first occupation was as a call boy, running to the homes of men employed on the train crew to let them know they were needed for work, as telephones were not then in use.

This photo shows Kennedy, second from left, circa 1910 at the Victoria Yard, the marshalling yards at Fort Erie/Bridgeburg, Ontario.

Fort Erie was then a bustling railway town and the railroad formed the social fabric of the community. The International Railway Bridge linking Fort Erie and Buffalo, New York, was built there in 1873 and still operates today.

The New York Central took over the Michigan Central line in 1929 and the old "board and batten" yard office was still in use until near the end of the Second World War. Sometime after 1960, the building was removed. A more modern brick depot replaced it across the tracks.

Tom Kennedy Jr. believes that his father was a brakeman or freight conductor when this picture was taken, judging by the clothing, but notes that the men have previously been erroneously identified as baggage handlers.

The other men in the photo are Frank Dunn, Charles Finlay, Smith Irvine, Ben Kraft, and Jack O'Neill.

Railway work was in the Kennedy family's blood. Tom Kennedy Sr.'s father was an oiler at the Victoria Yard and his grandfather supplied the railroad with ties. Tom Sr. completed forty-six years of service and was yardmaster for Victoria Yard at the time of his death in 1943. 🐿

Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in Canada's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied (please don't send priceless originals) and mail it to Album, c/o *The Beaver*, P.O. Box 56060, Portage Place RPO, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0G9. Or email your submission to album@thebeaver.ca. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your posted submission returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.



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